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FAUST

VOLUME I

"I sit and ponder one only thought"

Photogravure after the painting by A. Liezen Meyer

The Works of J. W. von Goethe

With His Life by
GEORGE HENRY LEWES

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Translations by
SIR WALTER SCOTT, SIR THEODORE MARTIN
JOHN OXENFORD, THOMAS CARLYLE
AND OTHERS

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Oxford Press

TO J. ANTHONY FROUDE

Dear friend of many years, accept
This book, which into life has crept
In hours that have been snatched from those
Were due to dearly earned repose.
Well do I know how deep and strong
Your reverence is for Goethe's song,
And how the problems, thickly sown
Throughout this book of his, have grown
Familiar to your thought and tongue
As the rare words in which they're sung.
You know — who better? — all that gives
This book its charm, the grace that lives
And breathes throughout its perfect verse,
The saws sarcastic, vivid, terse,
The wild wit flashing to and fro,
The varied lore, the sunny glow
Of fancy and of passion, fit
To glorify the exquisite
Conception of a Helen meet
To make Faust's dream of bliss complete, —
The tender beauty of the thought
That his deliverance should be wrought
By her who could in death forget
The wrong he did her — Margaret,
And twined his soul with hers by love
Eternal, pure, in realms above.
You, too, can measure well how great
His perils are, who would translate
The thoughts on aptest language strung,
And wed them to another tongue.
But you, like all true Masters, will
Look gently on my lack of skill,
And with a large allowance take
My effort for our friendship's sake.

Introduction

WHETHER Goethe should or should not have left his "Faust" a fragment, closing with the death of Margaret, is a question which has occasioned much controversy among his admirers. But there will always be many — and their number is more likely to increase than diminish — who will think that Goethe was himself the best judge of what was right, and that if he considered it essential, as unquestionably he did, to the fulfilment of the scheme on which the First Part of his great dramatic poem was based, that he should give in his own way the solution of the problem how Faust was to be extricated from the toils of the Evil One, into which he had plunged himself in a mood of weariness and despair, it cannot be otherwise than worth the while of literary students to make themselves familiar with what he had to say, whether they are satisfied or not with the way in which the Faust legend is illustrated, and the redemption of its hero is worked out.

It has been too much the habit of English readers to accept the eulogies of the Second Part of the "Faust" at second hand, and to decline to go through the fatigue of reading it with the care which it demands, and so following the destinies of Faust to the close. Nor, perhaps, is this greatly to be wondered at. The scheme of the book, teeming as it does with allusions to science, mythology, history, and art, unfits it for any but a highly educated and patient class of readers. It was avowedly for readers of this class

only that it was written ; and even for them it presents many passages difficult to interpret, many allusions hard to understand, and intricate problems which are not to be resolved without some effort of brain. Commentaries have sprung up, almost as voluminous as those under which the texts of Dante and of Shakespeare have long groaned. These, not a few of them at least, have had the usual result of aggravating the obscurity which they profess to clear away, so that we are thrown back upon the poem itself to gather such meanings and suggestions as our own reason or imagination can help us to. And, after all, these are quite sufficient for the enjoyment of what is really valuable in the poem. Such parts of it as demand the exposition of elaborate commentary, most lovers of poetry will agree, can scarcely deserve one. The moment poetry begins to deal in mysticism or philosophical problems, and to demand elaborate exposition, it ceases to be poetry. A natural instinct impels us to give all such rhymed obscurities the go-by, and to settle upon the flowers about whose fragrance and beauty there can be no mistake.

Of these this work presents an abundance sufficient to satisfy the most exacting taste. But to enjoy it thoroughly, the reader must bring both cultivated intelligence, and sympathy with the poetic faculty in its higher development. Those who want strong human interest must go elsewhere. They will not find it here. The whole action lies within "the limits of the sphere of dream." Even Faust and Mephistopheles are but as phantasms moving among phantasms. The pulses of the fatal passion, which resulted in the tragic ending of poor Margaret, are but poorly compensated by the fine frenzy of Faust for the Helen of antiquity. It is his imagination, not his heart, that is on fire. Ours also kindles before the exquisite painting of the poet, which sets every figure

in his drama before us as vividly as could have been done by the chisel of Phidias or the pencil of Titian. We are grateful for the rich series of pictures which he has passed before our eyes, but they leave no impression on our heart like the ineradicable pang of one such stroke of pathos as Margaret's

"Bin ich doch noch so jung, so jung!
Und soll schon sterben!"

Again, for those who seek in the "Faust" a solution of the great problem of life, the result at which Goethe seems to arrive is, we venture to think, neither very startling nor very novel. It is no more than the truth, which wise men of all ages have preached, that by those who aspire beyond the enjoyment of selfish tastes, intellectual or sensual happiness is only to be reached through active beneficence, through the application of knowledge and power to the welfare of mankind. While Faust pored in his study over musty volumes of medicine, jurisprudence, and theology, the accumulation of such knowledge as they taught brought only bitterness of heart, and a feeling that it satisfied none of the higher aspirations of his nature. When Faust, in his old age, takes to reclaiming land from the sea, to building harbours, and making hundreds of his fellow creatures happy, then the cravings of his heart are for the first time satisfied. With the prospect before him of the good to follow from his philanthropic schemes, he sees the moment at hand, which in his study he had not believed could ever come, when he should say to it —

"Verweile doch! du bist so schön!"

and be content to die. It is not Mephistopheles, but Faust's own internal development, that has wrought

this result; and thus the condition is never fulfilled which entitled Mephistopheles to claim his soul.

Another important but by no means novel truth Goethe may also have meant to enforce. It is one which is tolerably sure to have been reached by every man who has learned to place his happiness in helping toward the happiness of others — namely, that it is not here on earth that the soul can look for satisfaction. In a higher sense than was present to the mind of Ulysses in Tennyson's poem,

> "All experience is an arch, wherethrough
> Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever, as we move."

Problems thicken upon us the more we see, the more we think, the more we feel, of which the solution is not to be found within "this visible diurnal sphere." It is, in truth, only by the hope that these will be solved in that immortal life of which this of earth is but an initial stage, that existence is made endurable to those who suffer, and to those who think. This hope it was which, in the case of Socrates, for example, while it reconciled him to life, robbed death of its terrors, in the assurance that with death came the dawn of a brighter and nobler existence, of which the happiest experiences of this world were but feeble symbols, and in which he should see realised the things for which his soul had yearned on earth in vain. Almost the last words of the present poem point to the same faith, the Chorus Mysticus singing, as Faust is borne into the heavenly sphere —

> "Alles Vergängliche
> Ist nur ein Gleichniss;
> Das Unzulängliche
> Hier wird Ereigniss!"

These lines, and the lines that follow, which tell of a God who cares for the creatures of his hand, and who has prepared for them better things than all that they can ask or think, may, in our opinion, be fairly regarded as indicating the main drift of what Goethe had in view in concluding his version of the Faust legend in the way he did.

If this be so, then it is no doubt satisfactory to have his assent to this view of human life, and of human destiny; but it is no new discovery, and it has been enforced more clearly and emphatically from many familiar quarters.

Looking upon the poem in this light, we quite understand, although we do not share, the feeling expressed by Stieglitz, Lewes, and others, that it would have been better had the ultimate destiny of Faust been left in the uncertainty in which Goethe left it at the end of the First Part with Margaret's

"Heinrich! Mir graut's vor dir,"

and the cry of piteous pathos, "Heinrich! Heinrich!" from

"The voice from within, dying away."

with which the poem closes. This, however, would have been the mere statement of the problem, not the solution of it; and to have left his conception in this unfinished state would have been wholly inconsistent with the poet's purpose as indicated in the Prologue in Heaven, which gives the key-note to the whole composition.

As an artist Goethe could never have been content to leave his work incomplete. Happily, therefore, for those to whom poetry is something more than a mere amusement of the fancy or stimulus of the emotions, he determined to grapple with every detail of the

legend, as it grew through successive stages into a development, which enabled him to call into play all the resources of his imagination and of his consummate literary skill. Thus he gave us in this book some of his finest conceptions, and, beyond all doubt, his most exquisite workmanship. One can bear much that is tedious and obscure, sometimes perhaps even trivial, for the sake of such scenes as that in which Helen and Paris are evoked before the Emperor's Court, the whole of the Classical Walpurgis Night, and the Intermezzo of Helena. The dream of ideal beauty which since Homer's time has been associated with the name of Helen, has given rise to many a fine passage in poetry, of which none perhaps is more vividly remembered than the splendid apostrophe of Marlowe's Faust to

> " The face that launched a thousand ships,
> And burned the topless towers of Ilium."

But Goethe was too deeply penetrated by the idea of that " daughter of the gods, divinely tall, and most divinely fair," to be content with disposing so lightly as Marlowe did of her relation to Faust as he found it indicated in the old legend. Helen is to the Second Part of " Faust " what Margaret was to the First, — the centre upon which its interest turns; and upon this creation Goethe put forth all his powers. The passionate worship of beauty in and for itself kindles the verse wherever Helen appears or is referred to, even as the passion of Pygmalion gave life to the marble he had chiselled into form. The conception of the Helena, as wrought out here, was manifestly in Goethe's mind when he wrote the First Part; for it is clearly a vision of her supreme beauty, and not of Margaret, as the ordinary stage misrepresentations of the " Faust " would have us believe, that is presented

to Faust in the magic mirror of the Witches' Kitchen, when he exclaims:

"What form divine is this, that seems to live
Within this magic glass before mine eyes?
Oh, love, to me thy swiftest pinion give,
And waft me to the region where she lies!

. . . . . .

A woman's form, beyond expression fair!
Can woman be so fair? Or must I deem
In this recumbent form I see revealed
The quintessence of all the heavens can yield?
On earth can aught be found of beauty so supreme?"

All may not agree in admiration of the machinery by which this vision is made a reality, and Helena is brought back from the shades to become the bride of Faustus for a time. But no one can question the admirable skill with which Goethe, by a series of subtle touches, fills the imagination with the full rich beauty, the stately grace, and the resistless charm of her who "brought calamity where'er she came." Whatever the shortcomings of the poem in other respects may be, in all that bears upon this part of it the matured strength of a great artist is everywhere apparent, combined with a freshness and force which, considering the time of life at which it was written, are little less than wonderful.

Who, again, would be content to miss from literature the noble last act of the poem, — the scene, for example, in which Faust is smitten by blindness; or still more, the hymns which accompany his transport to heaven, and the vision of Gretchen, whose own bliss could not be perfected until she saw him, purified from the dross of earth, and accepted as not unworthy of the forgiveness which had been vouchsafed to herself? Only those to whom the original German has become a second language can know how perfect in

feeling and in rhythmical expression these hymns are; but those who have not this advantage may catch some glimpses of their beauty through a translation, although all translation of such work as this must of necessity be more or less a failure.

More than twenty years ago the present translator printed for private circulation a version of the Classical Walpurgis Night, and the Intermezzo of The Helena. Having subsequently translated the First Part of the drama, he naturally wished to complete his self-imposed task. Not till recently has he been able to resume this labour of love. None but an enthusiast for Goethe would, he frankly admits, undertake such a task; and even he, however great his qualifications, must be often tempted to throw down his pen in despair. To reproduce satisfactorily even a few pages of this work would be a crucial effort to the most accomplished translator. In none of Goethe's works are the marvellous beauty and finish of his style carried to a higher point. In many parts the charm lies almost exclusively in the execution; and a translator may well despair of making his readers tolerant of the matter by rivalling the exquisite manner of the original, with all the odds so heavily against him in the much less plastic character of our language as compared with the German. And when Goethe is at his best, he is simply untranslatable. Such as it is, the present version is offered, in the hope that it may assist English readers in the study of what Goethe regarded as the master-work of his life.

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Faust

DEDICATION

Ye come, dim forms, as in youth's early day
Ye blessed these eyes, which now so lonely grieve!
Still, still, to hold ye fast shall I essay,
Still let my heart to that delusion cleave!
Ye throng me round! Well! lord it how ye may,
As from the mists ye rise, that round me weave!
Ye waft a magic air, that shakes my breast
With youth's tumultuous, yet divine, unrest.

Visions ye bring with you of happy days,
And many a dear, dear, shade ascends to view;
Like some faint haunting chime of ancient lays,
Come love, first love, and friendship back with you.
The heart runs back o'er life's bewildered maze,
And pangs, long laid to sleep, awake anew,
And name the loved ones lost, — before their day
Swept, whilst life yet was beautiful, away.

Alas, alas! These strains they cannot hear,
The souls to whom my earliest lays I sang;
Gone is that loving band of friends so dear,
The echoes hushed, that once responsive rang;
My numbers fall upon the stranger's ear,
Whose very praise is to my heart a pang,
And all, who in my lays took pride of yore,
Are lost in other lands, or else no more.

And yearnings fill my soul, unwonted long,
To yonder still, sad, spirit-world to go;
Now, like Æolian harp, my faltering song
Rises and falls in fitful cadence low;
A shudder thrills me, as old memories throng,
The strong heart melts, tears fast on tear-drops flow,
What still is mine seems far, far off to be,
And what has vanished lives anew for me.

Prelude at the Theatre

Prelude at the Theatre

MANAGER.

POET OF THE THEATRE. MERRYMAN.

MANAGER.

OLD friends and true, my proved allies
In times of trouble and of need,
Say how you think our enterprise
Will here on German soil succeed.
My aim and chief delight would be
To please the crowd, especially
As "Live and let live" is their creed.
Our booth is up, both wind and water tight,
And all are looking forward to a treat:
Even now they sit, with eyebrows raised, and quite
For marvels primed, to lift them off their feet.
Well know I how to hit the public taste,
Yet ne'er felt so perplexed as now I feel;
'Tis true, they're not accustomed to the best,
But then the rogues have read an awful deal.
How to contrive, then, something fresh and new,
To set them thinking, yet amuse them too?
For, sooth, it glads my heart the crowd to view,
When, setting toward our booth with streamlike rush,
They pour along, wave coursing wave, and through
The narrow doorway elbow, squeeze, and crush:
When in broad day, by three, or even before,
They make a dash at the pay-taker's wicket,
Like starving men, that storm a baker's door
For bread, their ribs imperilling for a ticket.

This miracle on men so various may
The poet only work. Work thou it, friend, to-day!

POET.

Oh, tell me not of yonder motley crew,
Which scares our spirit with its aspect coarse,
Yon surging crowd, oh, veil it from my view,
Which in its eddies drags us down perforce!
No, lead me to some heaven-calm nook, where true
Delight hath for the bard alone its source,
Where love and friendship wake, refine, expand
Our heart's blest blessings with celestial hand.

What there has touched the spirit's inward ear,
And on the lips a trembling echo found,
Uncertain now, now full, perchance, and clear,
Is in the wild world's dizzying tumult drowned.
Oft only after throes of year on year
With perfect form our spirit's dream is crowned;
The showy lives its little hour; the true
To after-times bears rapture ever new.

MERRYMAN.

Truce to this prate of after-times! Were I
Of after-times to babble thus, why, who
With fun would these our present times supply?
Yet fun they will have, and with reason, too.
A jovial presence, readiness, address,
Go far, believe me, to command success.
He that can put what he has got to say
Into the compass of a pleasant piece,
And send his points home well, he, come what may,
Will ne'er be soured by popular caprice.
He wants a large wide public for his sphere;
There burns his genius with a tenfold ardour,
For there, he knows, he's sure to catch their ear,

To move them deeper, and to hit them harder.
Coragio, then, — to work! and let them see
The very type of what a piece should be.
Fancy with all her ministering train, —
Thought, Reason, Feeling, Passion, Melancholy, —
Make these to speak, each in her proper strain,
And last, not least, forget not, mark me, Folly!

MANAGER.

But put, be sure, whatever else you may,
Enough of incident into your play,
Plenty to look at, — that's what people like,
'Tis what they come for; dazzle, then, their eyes
With bustle, plot, spectacle, — things that strike
The multitude with open-mouthed surprise.
"Superb! sublime!" they cry, "what breadth! what power!"
And you become the lion of the hour.
Only by mass can you subdue the masses,
A sop for every taste, for every bent;
He that brings much brings something for all classes,
And everybody quits the house content.
If you're to give a piece, in pieces give it!
With a ragout like that succeed you must.
To serve it up so is quite easy — just
As easy anyhow as to invent it.
In one organic whole though you present it,
Harmonious and compact, it little matters;
The public's sure to tear it into tatters,
Blur every tint, and every joint unrivet.

POET.

You do not feel how all unworthy is
Such vulgar handicraftsman's work as this;
How little consonant with every aim
That spurs the genuine artist on to fame.

Mere paltry patchwork, gaudy, and unreal,
Run up at random by your bungling fool,
Alas! too well, I see, is your ideal.
Approved by choice and justified by rule.

MANAGER.

Rail on! I care not how you thrust.
Whoe'er would work to purpose must
Choose tools that best his purpose fit.
Think what soft wood you have to split,
And only look for whom you write.
One comes to seek a brief respite
From *ennui*, if he can, and vapours;
Another, stupid from a heavy meal,
And, what is worse than all a deal,
Scores fresh from reading magazines and papers.
They rush to us as to a masquerade,
Quite in the cue for dissipation,
And the mere prospect of a new sensation
Wings all their footsteps, man and maid.
The ladies, in their best arrayed,
Think only how to catch the eye,
And with our own performers vie,
Themselves performers, though unpaid.
Your poet-dreams, your soarings high,
Oh, they were there appropriate, very!
Zounds, do you fancy these will ever draw
A bumper house, or make it merry?
Regard your patrons closely. Why,
They're one half cold, the other raw.
One's longing for the play to end,
That he may have his game of cards in quiet,
Another's eager to be off, to spend
The night upon a wench's lap in riot.
Why then, ye simpletons, for such a pack
Put the sweet, gracious Muses on the rack?

I tell you, only give enough to hear and see,
No matter what the quality may be!
And you can never miss your mark. Contrive
To keep folks' curiosity alive,
Their senses stun, and mystify their brains;
To satisfy them's more than man can do.
How! What's amiss? Are these poetic pains,
Or stomach-qualms, that have got hold of you?

POET.

Begone, and seek elsewhere some other man,
Lackey in soul, to work on such a plan!
What! shall the poet fool, at thy behest,
The right away? 'Twere sin if he forsook
His human-heartedness, the noblest, best,
Endowment, which from Nature's hands he took.
By what stirs he all hearts as by a spell,
And makes them quail, or at his will be strong?
By what does he each element compel
To lend some fresh enchantment to his song?
Oh, is it not the harmony that rings
From his full soul with unconstrainèd art,
And, circling round creation's orbit, brings
The whole world back in music to his heart?
When Nature winds her endless threads along
The spindles, heedless how they cross or tangle,
When all created things, a jarring throng,
In chaos intermingling, clash and jangle,
Who parts them, till each living fibre takes
Its ordered place, and moves in rhythmic time,
Who in the general consecration makes
Each unit swell the symphony sublime?
Who links our passions with the tempest's glooms,
Our solemn thoughts with twilight's roseate red,
Who scatters all the springtide's loveliest blooms
Along the path the loved one deigns to tread?
Who of some chance green leaves doth chaplets twine

Of glory for desert in every field,
Assures Olympus, gives the stamp divine?
Man's power immortal in the bard revealed!

MERRYMAN.

To work, then, with these powers so rare,
And ply your task of bard and singer,
As people push a love-affair!
They meet by accident, are smitten, linger,
And get themselves somehow into a tangle;
All's love and bliss, — then comes a tiff, a wrangle,
In heaven one hour, the next, despair, distraction,
And, presto, lo! a whole romance in action!
After this fashion let us, too,
Construct our piece. But see that you
Go straight at all the stir and strife
That agitate our human life;
All have it, but not many know it.
Get hold of it where'er you will,
In all its motley mixture show it,
And it is interesting still.
A medley give of personages, wheeling
'Neath impulses half seen, half hid from view,
With much that's false to nature and to feeling
Mix here and there a spice of something true:
So you a famous beverage compound,
To rouse and edify the house all round.
Then to your play throngs youth's prime flower, intent
To see its future there made clear and plain,
Then tender souls from it seek nourishment,
To feed withal their melancholy vein.
Call up now this, now that, love, hate, mirth, rage, despair,
And all will then behold what in their heart they bear.
They still are of that happy age, when they
Are equally prepared to laugh or weep;

They still can find a pleasure in display,
Still reverence bold imagination's sweep.
He that is past his growth, hard, formal, set,
There's no contenting him, howe'er you sing:
The young, with all their growth before them yet,
Will thank you heartily for all you bring.

POET.

Then give, give me back too the days
When I myself, like them, was growing,
When forth gushed thronging lays on lays,
As from a fountain ever flowing;
When to my wondering eyes the world,
As in a veil of mist, was set,
And every bud gave promise yet
Of marvels in its leaves upcurled;
When swiftly sped the happy hours,
As, roaming like a summer gale,
I plucked at will the thousand flowers
That blossomed thick through every vale.
Nought had I then, yet had in sooth
Such wealth as nothing could enhance,
The thirst unquenchable for truth,
The blest delusions of romance.
Give each bold impulse back to me,
The deep wild joy that thrilled like pain,
The might of hate, love's ecstasy,
Give me my youth again!

MERRYMAN.

Of youth, good friend, you would have need, no doubt,
If foes on battle-plain were round you pressing,
If some fond wench had flung her arms about
Your neck, and plied you hard with her caressing;
If from a far-off goal, nigh out of sight,
The wreath, for him that wins the prize, were blinking,

If, after dancing madly half the night,
You settled down to spend the rest in drinking;
But on the lyre's familiar strings to lay
Your grasp with masterful, yet sweet control,
And, there meandering gracefully, to stray
On to your shining self-appointed goal, —
This the vocation is of you old fellows,
Nor do we therefore prize you less, my friend.
Age does not make men childish, as folks tell us,
It only finds them children to the end.

MANAGER.

Enough of talk! At all events,
I fain would see you up and doing:
While you are turning compliments,
Something to purpose might be brewing.
Why speak of waiting for the mood?
Wait, and 'twill never come at all!
You set up for a poet, — good!
Then hold your poetry at call.
You know the article we want, —
A drink strong, sharp, and stimulant, —
So get to work, and brew away!
Full well we wot, and to our sorrow,
That what's not set about to-day
Is never finished on the morrow.
No man of sense will waste in such
Delays one day, one single hour;
No, he will by the forelock clutch
Whatever lies within his power;
Stick fast to it, and neither shirk,
Nor from his enterprise be thrust,
But, having once begun to work,
Go working on, because he must.
On German stages one expects,
You know, vagaries wild and daring,
So of mechanical effects,

And gorgeous scenery be not sparing!
Turn on heaven's greater light and less,
Be lavish of the stars withal,
Fire, forest, sea, crag, waterfall,
Birds, beasts into your service press.
So in this narrow booth sweep round
Creation to its farthest bound,
And, with such speed as best will tell,
From heaven post through the world to hell!

Prologue in Heaven

Prologue in Heaven

THE LORD. THE HEAVENLY HOSTS. *Afterward* MEPHISTOPHELES.

THE THREE ARCHANGELS *come forward.*

RAPHAEL.

THE sun in chorus, as of old,
With brother spheres is sounding still,
And, on its thunderous orbit rolled,
Doth its appointed course fulfil.
The angels, as they gaze, grow strong,
Though fathom it they never may;
These works sublime, untouched by wrong,
Are bright as on the primal day.

GABRIEL.

And swift, beyond conceiving swift,
The earth is wheeling onward; mark!
From dark to light its surface shift,
From brightest light to deepest dark!
In foam the sea's broad billows leap,
And lash the rocks with giant force,
And rock and billow onward sweep
With sun and stars in endless course.

MICHAEL.

And battling storms are raging high
From shore to sea, from sea to shore,

And radiate currents, as they fly,
That quicken earth through every pore.
There blasting lightnings scatter fear,
And thunders peal; but here they lay
Their terrors down, and, Lord, revere
The gentle going of Thy day.

THE THREE.

The angels, as they gaze, grow strong,
Yet fathom Thee they never may;
And all Thy works, untouched by wrong,
Are bright as on the primal day.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Since Thou, O Lord, amongst us com'st once more,
To ask how things are getting forward here,
And Thou hast commonly been kind before,
I at thy levee with the rest appear.
I can't talk grandly, not though these fine folks
Should all upon my homeliness cry scorn;
My pathos surely would Thy mirth provoke,
If Thou hadst not all merriment forsworn.
Of sun and worlds I nothing have to say;
I only see how mortals fume and fret.
The world's small god retains his old stamp yet,
And is as queer as on the primal day.
He had been better off, hadst Thou not some
Faint gleam of heavenly light into him put;
Reason he calls it, and doth yet become
More brutish through it than the veriest brute.
He seems to me, if I my thought may state,
One of those grasshoppers, with legs ell-long,
That flies and leaps, and flies again, and straight
Down in the grass is piping its old song!
If to the grass he kept, his grief were less,
But he will thrust his nose in every dirty mess!

THE LORD.

Hast thou, then, nothing else to say but this?
Comest thou ever, only to complain?
Art thou with nothing upon earth content?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No, Lord! I find things there, as ever, much amiss.
Men and their troubles cause me genuine pain;
Not even I would the poor souls torment.

THE LORD.

Dost thou know Faust?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What! Doctor Faust?

THE LORD.

My servant.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thy servant? Well, his service may be fervent,
But it is surely of the strangest kind.
Not upon earth, the fool! is he
Content his food or drink to find;
Craving for what can never be,
Yet scarce to his own madness blind,
He would be soaring far and free,
In hopes to clutch Immensity.
From heaven he asks its fairest star,
From earth its every chief delight,
Yet all that's near, and all that's far,
Although they lay within his might,
Would never yield the looked-for zest,
Nor still the torturing tumult of his breast.

THE LORD.

Though now he serve me stumblingly, the hour
Is nigh when I shall lead him into light.
When the tree buds, the gardener knows that flower
And fruit will make the coming seasons bright.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What will you wager? If you only let
Me lead him without hindrance my own way,
I'll answer for it, you shall lose him yet!

THE LORD.

So long as on the earth he lives, you may
Your snares for him and fascinations set:
Man, while his struggle lasts, is prone to stray.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

For this you have my thanks; for I protest
That with dead men I never cared to deal;
Plump, rosy cheeks are what I like the best.
When corpses call, I'm out; for, sooth, I feel,
Like cats with mice, 'tis life that gives the zest.

THE LORD.

Enough, 'tis granted! From the source where he
His being had, this spirit turn aside,
And lead him, if thou'rt able, down with thee,
Along thy way, that pleasant is and wide;
And stand abashed, when thou art forced to own,
A good man, in the darkness and dismay
Of powers that fail, and purposes o'erthrown,
May still be conscious of the proper way.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Good! But at rest the point will soon be set;
I'm not at all alarmed about my bet.

If I should win, and crow too loudly, you
Will not amiss my little triumph take?
Dust shall he eat, ay, and with relish, too,
Like that old cousin of mine, the famous snake.

THE LORD.

As to this, also, thou art wholly free;
Hate have I never felt for such as thee!
Among the spirits that deny,
The scoffer doth offend me least of all.
Who may on man's activity rely?
Into indulgent ease 'tis apt to fall.
Whatever his beginnings, soon he grows
To yearn for unconditional repose;
And therefore am I always glad to yoke
In fellowship with him a comrade who
Is ever ready to incite, provoke,
And must, as devil, be stirring, such as you.

But, ye true sons of heaven, rejoice to share
The wealth exuberant of all that's fair,
Which lives, and has its being everywhere!
And the creative essence which surrounds,
And lives all-wheres, and worketh evermore,
Encompass you within love's gracious bounds;
And all the world of things which flit before
The gaze, in seeming fitful and obscure,
Do ye in lasting thoughts embody and secure!

[*Heaven closes; the* ARCHANGELS *disperse.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*alone*).

The Old One now and then I like to see,
And not to break with him take special heed.
'Tis very good of such a great grandee
To be so civil to me, 'tis indeed.

Faust

A Tragedy

Faust: A Tragedy

ACT I.

Scene I. — *Night.*

A lofty, vaulted, narrow, Gothic chamber — Faust *seated at his desk.*

FAUST.

All that philosophy can teach,
The craft of lawyer and of leech,
I've mastered, ah! and sweated through
Theology's dreary deserts, too;
Yet here, poor fool! for all my lore,
I stand no wiser than before.
They call me magister, save the mark!
Doctor, withal! and these ten years I
Have been leading my pupils a dance in the dark,
Up hill, down dale, through wet and through dry —
And yet, that nothing can ever be
By mortals known, too well I see!
This is burning the heart clean out of me.
More brains have I than all the tribe
Of doctor, magister, parson, and scribe.
From doubts and scruples my soul is free;
Nor hell nor devil has terrors for me:
But just for this I am dispossessed
Of all that gives pleasure to life and zest.
I can't even juggle myself to own

There is any one thing to be truly known,
Or aught to be taught in science or arts,
To better mankind and to turn their hearts.
Besides, I have neither land nor pence,
Nor worldly honour nor influence.
A dog in my case would scorn to live!
So myself to magic I've vowed to give,
And see, if through spirit's might and tongue
The heart from some mysteries cannot be wrung;
If I cannot escape from the bitter woe
Of babbling of things that I do not know,
And get to the root of those secret powers
Which hold together this world of ours,
The sources and centres of force explore,
And chaffer and dabble in words no more.

Oh, broad bright moon, if this might be
The last of the nights of agony,
The countless midnights, these weary eyes
Have from this desk here watched thee rise!
Then, sad-eyed friend, thy wistful looks
Shone in upon me o'er paper and books;
But oh! might I wander, in thy dear light,
O'er the trackless slopes of some mountain height,
Round mountain caverns with spirits sail,
Or float o'er the meads in thy hazes pale;
And, freed from the fumes of a fruitless lore,
Bathe in thy dews, and be whole once more!

Ah me! am I penned in this dungeon still?
Accursèd doghole, clammy and chill!
Where heaven's own blessèd light must pass,
Shorn of its rays, through the painted glass,
Narrowed and cumbered by piles of books,
That are gnawed by worms and grimed with dust,
And which, with its smoke-stained paper, looks
Swathed to the roof in a dingy rust;

Stuck round with phials, and chests untold,
With instruments littered, and lumbered with old,
Crazy, ancestral household ware —
This is your world! A world most rare!

And yet can you wonder why your soul
Is numbed within your breast, and why
A dead, dull anguish makes your whole
Life's pulses falter, and ebb, and die?
How should it be but so? Instead
Of the living nature, whereinto
God has created man, things dead
And drear alone encompass you —
Smoke, litter, dust, the skeletons
Of birds and beasts, and dead men's bones!

Up, up! Away to the champaign free!
And this mysterious volume, writ
By Nostradamus' self, is it
Not guide and counsel enough for thee?
Then wilt thou learn by what control
The stars within their orbits roll,
And if thou wilt let boon Nature be
The guide and monitress to thee,
Thy soul shall expand with tenfold force,
As spirit with spirit holds discourse.
Dull poring, think not, that can here
Expound these holy signs to thee!
Ye spirits, ye are hovering near,
If ye can hear me, answer me!

[*Throws open the book, and discovers the sign of the Macrocosm.*

Ha! as it meets my gaze, what rapture, gushing
Through all my senses, mounts into my brain!
Youth's ecstasy divine, I feel it rushing,
Like quickening fire, through every nerve and vein!
Was it a god who chronicled these signs,

Which all the war within me still,
The aching heart with sweetness fill,
And to mine eyes, in clearest lines,
Unveil all Nature's powers as with a mystic thrill?
Am I a god? All grows so bright.
In these pure outlines I behold
Nature at work before my soul unrolled.
Now can I read the sage's saw aright:
"Not barred to man the world of spirits is;
Thy sense is shut, thy heart is dead!
Up, student, lave, — nor dread the bliss, —
Thy earthly breast in the morning-red!"
[*Gazes intently at the sign.*
Into one whole how all things blend,
One in the other working, living!
What powers celestial, lo! ascend, descend,
Each unto each the golden pitchers giving!
And, wafting blessings from their wings,
From heaven through farthest earth career,
While through the universal sphere
One universal concord rings!

Oh, what a show! yet but a show! Ah me!
Where, boundless Nature, shall I clutch at thee?
Ye breasts, where are ye? Ye perennial springs
Of life, whereon hang heaven and earth,
Whereto the blighted bosom clings,
Ye gush, ye slake all thirst, yet I pine on in dearth!
[*Turns the leaves of the book angrily, and sees the sign of the Earth Spirit.*
How differently I feel before this sign!
Earth Spirit, thou to me art nearer;
My faculties grow loftier, clearer,
Even now I glow as with new wine.
Courage I feel, into the world to roam,
To bid earth's joys and sorrows hail,
'Mid storm and struggle to make my home,

And in the crash of shipwreck not to quail.
Clouds gather o'er my head;
The moon conceals her light,
The lamp's gone out. The air
Grows thick and close! Red flashes play
Around me. From the vaulted roof
A shuddering horror creeps
And on me lays its gripe!
Spirit by me invoked, I feel
Thou'rt hovering near, — thou art, thou art!
Unveil thyself!
Ha! What a tugging at my heart!
Stirred through their depths, my senses reel
With passions new and strange! I feel
My heart is thine, thine wholly! Hear!
Thou must! ay, though it cost my life, thou must appear!

[*Seizes the book, and utters the sign of the Spirit mysteriously. A red light flashes, in which the Spirit appears.*

SPIRIT.

Who calls on me?

FAUST (*turning away*).

Dread vision gaunt!

SPIRIT.

By potent art thou'st dragged me here;
Thou'st long been sucking at my sphere,
And now —

FAUST.

I loathe thee. Hence, avaunt!

SPIRIT.

To view me were thy prayer and choice,
To see my face, to hear my voice.
Well! by thy potent prayer won o'er,
I come. And thou, that wouldst be more
Than mortal, having thy behest,
Art with a craven fear possessed!
Where is thy pride of soul? Where now the breast
Which in itself a universe created,
Sustained and fostered, — which dilated
With giant throes of rapture, in the hope
As peer with spirits such as me to cope?
Where art thou, Faust, whose summons rang so wide,
Who stormed my haunts, and would not be denied?
Is this thing thou? This, my mere breath doth make
Through every nerve and fibre quake?
A crawling, cowering, timorous worm?

FAUST.

Thou film of flame, art thou a thing to fear?
I am, I am that Faust! I am thy peer!

SPIRIT.

In the currents of Life, in Action's storm,
I wander and I wave;
Everywhere I be!
Birth and the grave,
An infinite sea,
A web ever growing,
A life ever glowing;
Thus at Time's whizzing loom I spin,
And weave the living vesture that God is mantled in!

FAUST.

Thou busy Spirit, who dost sweep
From sphere to sphere, from deep to deep,

Ranging the world from end to end,
How near akin I feel to thee!

SPIRIT.

Thou'rt like the Spirit, thou dost comprehend,
But not like me! [*Vanishes.*

FAUST.

But not like thee!
Whom, then? What! I,
The image of the Deity!
Yet not to be compared to thee? [*A knock.*

O death! My Famulus! At time like this
To drag me from the top of bliss!
That such a soulless driveller should
Disturb this vision's full beatitude!

Enter WAGNER, *in his dressing-gown and nightcap, with a lamp in his hand.* FAUST *turns away impatiently.*

WAGNER.

I heard you, did I not, declaim?
From one, no doubt, of the old Greek plays?
So in the art to take a hint I came;
For it is much in favour nowadays.
Many a time I've heard it said, at least,
An actor might give lessons to a priest.

FAUST.

Yes, if the priest an actor be,
As now and then will happen, certainly.

WAGNER.

Ah! when one's in his study pent, like me,
And sees the world but on a rare occasion,

And then far off, on some chance holiday,
And through a telescope, as one may say,
How can one ever hope to sway,
Or govern it by eloquent persuasion ?

FAUST.

That is a power, which is not to be taught.
It must be felt, must gush forth from within,
And, rising to the lips in words unsought,
The hearts of all to deep emotion win.
Sit on for ever ! Till you ache,
Your patchwork and mosaics make ;
With scraps at others' banquets found
A ragout of your own compound,
And, blowing at your ash-heap, fan
What miserable flame you can !
Children and apes may praise your art —
A noble triumph, you must own —
But you will never make heart throb with heart,
Unless your own heart first has struck the tone.

WAGNER.

Delivery makes the orator's success.
In that I'm far behind, I must confess.

FAUST.

Scorn such success ! Play thou an honest game !
Be no mere empty tinkling fool !
True sense and reason reach their aim
With little help from art or rule.
Be earnest ! Then what need to seek
The words that best your meaning speak ?
Oh, your orations, garnished, trimmed, refined,
Tickling men's fancies where they're chiefly weak,
Are unrefreshing as the drizzling wind,
That through the autumn's sere leaves whistles bleak.

WAGNER.

Ah me! art is so long, and life so brief!
Oft in my labours critical, a load
Seems weighing on my brain and heart, like lead.
How hard it is, almost beyond belief,
To get at knowledge in its fountainhead!
And ere a man is half-way on the road,
He's very sure, poor devil, to be dead.

FAUST.

Is parchment, then, the sacred fount can give
The stream that shall allay thy thirst for ever?
Man never quaffed a draught restorative,
That from his own soul welled not — never, never!

WAGNER.

Excuse me, surely 'tis a joy sublime,
To realise the spirit of a time,
To see how sages long ago have thought,
And the high pass to which things nowadays are brought.

FAUST.

High pass! Oh, yes! As the welkin high!
My friend, to us they are, these times gone by,
A book with seven seals, and what you call
The spirit of the times, I've long suspected,
Is but the spirit of the men — that's all —
In which the times they prate of are reflected.
And that's a sight, God wot, so poor, so mean,
We run away from it, as soon as seen;
Mere scraps of odds and ends, old crazy lumber,
In dust-bins only fit to rot and slumber;
At best a play on stilts, all strut and glare,
Gewgaws and glitter, fustian and pretence,

With maxims strewn of sage pragmatic air,
That, mouthed by puppets, pass with fools for sense.

WAGNER.

Ay, but the world! The heart and soul of man,
Something of these may, sure, be learned by all.

FAUST.

As men call learning, yes, no doubt, it can!
But who the child by its right name will call?
The few, who something of that knowledge learned,
And were not wise enough a guard to keep
On their full hearts, but to the people showed
The reaches of their soaring thoughts, the deep
Emotions that within them glowed,
Men at all times have crucified and burned.[1]
I prithee, friend, 'tis far into the night,
And for the present we must say adieu!

WAGNER.

I'd gladly watch till dawn, for the delight
Of such most edifying talk with you.
To-morrow, being Easter-day,
Good sir, if I so far might task you,
Some things there are, which I should like to say,
Some further questions I should like to ask you;
My zeal has in my studies not been small;
Much, it is true, I know, but I would fain know all.
[*Exit.*

FAUST.

Strange, that all hope has not long since been blighted
In one content on such mere chaff to feed,

[1] Whenever a great soul gives utterance to its thoughts, there also is Golgotha. — HEINE.

Who digs for treasure with a miser's greed,
And, if he finds a muck-worm, is delighted!

Dare such a thing as this to babble now,
When all around with spirit-life is teeming?
Yet ah, I thank thee, though the sorriest thou
Of all that tread the earth in mortal seeming.
Thou rescuedst me from the despair that fast
Was wildering my brain with mad surmise.
Ah, yonder vision was so giant-vast,
I shrank before it to a pigmy's size.

I, God's own image, I, who deemed I stood
With truth eternal full within my gaze,
And, of this earthly husk divested, viewed
In deep contentment heaven's effulgent blaze;
I, more than cherub, whose free powers, methought,
Did all the veins of nature permeate,
I, who — so potently my fancy wrought —
Conceived that, like a god, I could create,
And in creating taste a bliss supreme,
How must I expiate my frenzied dream?
One word, that smote like thunder on my brain,
Swept me away to nothingness again.

I dared not deem myself for thee a peer;
Though to evoke thee I the power possessed,
Yet was I impotent to keep thee here.
Oh, in the rapture of that moment blest
I felt myself so little, yet so great!
But thou didst thrust me back, with cruel scorn,
Upon the sad uncertainties forlorn
Of man's mere mortal state.
Who is to teach me? What shall I
Recoil from? What go widely by?
Yon impulse, passionate, profound,
Shall I obey it, or forswear?

Alas! our way of life is cramped and bound
By what we do, no less than what we're doomed to bear!

Around our spirit's dreams, our noblest, best,
Some base alloy for ever clings and grows;
Once of the good things of this world possessed,
We call a better wealth but lying shows.
The glorious feelings, those that most we prized,
That made indeed our very life of life,
In the world's turmoil and ignoble strife
Are seared and paralysed.

If fancy, for a season flushed with hope,
Through boundless ether soars with wing unchecked,
A little space for her is ample scope.
When in Time's quicksands joy on joy lies wrecked,
Anon creeps care into our nether heart,
And there of secret sorrows breeds great store;
Uneasily she sits, and mopes apart,
Marring our joy and peace; and evermore
Fresh masks she dons, to work us bitter dole.
Turn where we will, she haunts our life,
As house and land, as child and wife,
As fire and flood, as knife and poisoned bowl.

I am not like the gods, too well I feel!
No! Like the worm, that writhes in dust, am I,
Which, as it feeds on dust, the passer-by
Stamps into nothingness beneath his heel.

For what but dust, mere dust, is all,
Which, piled in endless shelf and press,
From floor to roof, contracts this lofty wall?
The trash, all frippery and emptiness,
Which here, in this moth-swarming hole,
Cramps, cabins, and confines my soul?

How shall I e'er discover here
The light and lore for which I yearn?
Is all my poring, year by year.
On books by thousands, but to learn
That mortals have been wretched everywhere,
And only one been happy here and there?
What, hollow skull, what means that grin of thine,
But that thy brain was once, like mine, distraught,
Did after truth with rapturous passion pine,
And, while the radiance of the day it sought,
Grew at each step less certain of its way,
And in the twilight went disastrously astray?

Ye instruments, at me ye surely mock,
With cog and wheel, and coil and cylinder!
I at the door of knowledge stood, ye were
The key which should that door for me unlock;
Your wards, I ween, have many a cunning maze,
But yet the bolts ye cannot, cannot raise.
Inscrutable in noonday's blaze,
Nature lets no one tear the veil away,
And what herself she does not choose
Unasked before your soul to lay,
You shall not wrest from her by levers or by screws.

Old lumber, that hast ne'er been used by me,
The reason, and the only, thou art here,
Is that my father worked of yore with thee!
And thou, old roll, hast rotted here and mouldered,
Smeared with the fumes of smoke year after year,
Since first upon this desk the dull lamp smouldered.
Oh, better far, had I with hand profuse
Squandered the little I can call my own,
Than with that little here to sweat and groan!
Would you possess, enjoy and turn to use
What from your sires you have inherited.
What a man owns, but knows not to employ,

A burden is, that weighs on him like lead;
Nought can avail him, nought can he enjoy,
Save what is by the passing moment bred.

Why is my gaze on yonder corner glued?
Yon flask, is it a magnet to my sight?
Why, why is all at once as lovely, bright,
As sudden moonshine in a midnight wood?

All hail, thou priceless phial, which I here
Take from thy shelf with reverential hand!
In thee man's skill and wisdom I revere.
Thou quintessence of all the juices bland,
That drowse the brain with slumber, — abstract thou
Of all most subtle deadly agencies,
Bestow thy grace upon thy master now!
I see thee, and my anguish finds a balm,
I touch thee, and the turmoil turns to calm;
My soul's flood-tide is ebbing by degrees.
A viewless finger beckons me to fleet
To shoreless seas, where never tempest roars,
The glassy flood is shining at my feet,
Another day invites to other shores.

A car of fire, by airy pinions driven,
Flits o'er me: and I stand prepared to flee,
By tracts untrodden, through the wastes of heaven,
Up to new spheres of pure activity.
This life sublime, this godlike rapturous thrill,
Can these by thee, a worm but now, be won?
Yes, so thou turn with a resolvèd will
Thy back on earth, and on its kindly sun!
The gates, most men would slink like cravens by,
Dare thou to burst asunder! Lo, the hour
Is here at hand by deeds to testify
Man's worth can front the gods in all their power;

To gaze unblenching on that murky pit
Where fancy weaves herself an endless doom,
To storm that pass whose narrow gorge is lit
By hell-fires flickering through the ghastly gloom;
Serene, although the risk before thee lay,
Into blank nothingness to melt away!

Then come thou down, pure goblet crystalline,
Out from that time-stained covering of thine,
Where I unmarked for years have let thee rest.
Thou sparkled'st when my grandsire's feasts were crowned,
Lit'st up the smiles of many a sad-browed guest,
As each man to his neighbour passed thee round.
Thy figures, marvels of the artist's craft,
The drinker's task, to tell their tale in rhyme,
And drain thy huge circumference at a draught,
Bring many a night back of my youthful prime.
I shall not pass thee now to comrade boon,
Nor torture my invention to explain
The quaint devices of thy graver's brain.
Here is a juice intoxicates full soon;
Its current brown brims up thy ample bowl.
Now do I pledge this draught, my last best care,
In festive greeting, and with all my soul,
To the day-dawn, shall hail me otherwhere!

[*Raises the goblet to his lips. Pealing of bells, and choral song.*

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ is ascended!
Hail the glad token,
True was it spoken,
Sin's fetters are broken,
Man's bondage is ended!

FAUST.

What deepening hum is this, what silver chime
Drags from my lips perforce the cup away?
Ye booming bells, do you proclaim the time
Once more begun of Easter's festal day?
And you, ye pealing choirs, do you the songs
Of consolation and glad tidings chant,
Hymned round the sepulchre by angel throngs,
Pledge of a new and nobler covenant?

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

With myrrh and with aloes
We balmed and we bathed Him,
Loyally, lovingly,
Tenderly swathed Him;
With cerecloth and band
For the grave we arrayed Him;
But oh, He is gone
From the place where we laid Him!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ is ascended!
The love that possessed Him,
The pangs that oppressed Him,
To prove and to test Him,
In triumph have ended!

FAUST.

Ye heavenly strains, potent yet soothing, why
Seek ye out me, a crawler in the dust?
Ring out for men more pliant-souled than I!
The message though I hear, I lack the faith robust.
Faith's darling child is miracle. I must,
I dare not strive to mount to yonder spheres
Whence peal these tidings of great joy to men;

Yet does the strain, familiar to mine ears
From childhood, call me back even now to life again.
Ah, then I felt the kiss of heavenly love
On me in Sabbath's holy calm descending,
The bells rang mystic meanings from above,
A prayer was ecstasy, that seemed unending;
A longing sweet, that would not be controlled,
Drove me through field and wood; and from my eyes
Whilst tears, whose source I could not fathom, rolled,
I felt a great glad world for me arise.
This anthem heralded youth's merriest time,
The gambols of blithe Spring: now memories sweet,
Fraught with the feelings of my childhood's prime,
From the last step decisive stay my feet.
Oh, peal, sweet heavenly anthems, peal as then!
Tears flood mine eyes, earth has her child again.

CHORUS OF DISCIPLES.

He that was buried
On high has ascended;
There lives in glory,
Sublimely attended.
In heaven whilst He reigneth,
For us Who was slain here,
On earth we, His chosen,
To suffer remain here, —
To suffer and languish
Midst pain and annoy;
Lord, in our anguish,
We envy Thy joy.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

From the lap of corruption,
Lo! Christ has ascended!
Rejoice, for the fetters
That bound you are rended!

Praise Him unceasingly,
Love one another,
Break bread together, like
Sister and brother!
Preach the glad tidings
To all who will hear you,
So will the Master be
Evermore near you!

Scene II. — *Before the Town Gate.*

Promenaders of all kinds pass out.

A PARTY OF MECHANICS.

But why are you turning up the hill?

ANOTHER PARTY.

We for the Jägerhaus are bound.

FIRST PARTY.

We think of sauntering toward the mill.

A MECHANIC.

Best by the Wasserhof go round.

SECOND MECHANIC.

The road there is none of the prettiest.

THE OTHERS.

And where are you for?

THIRD MECHANIC.

I go with the rest.

FOURTH MECHANIC.

Come up to the Burgdorf! That's the place
Where one is sure to find the best of cheer,
The prettiest wenches, and the strongest beer,
And a good jolly row in any case.

FIFTH MECHANIC.

You pestilent scapegrace,
A third time do you want to be well whacked?
I don't half fancy going there; in fact,
I have a perfect horror of the place.

SERVANT GIRL.

I will go back to town, I will, that's flat!

SECOND SERVANT GIRL.

We're sure to find him at the poplars yonder.

FIRST SERVANT GIRL.

And much the better I shall be for that!
By whose side will he walk, I wonder?
Why, yours! And dance with you, and you alone;
So, while you have your frolic, I may moan.

SECOND SERVANT GIRL.

He's sure to have a friend! Ah, come now, do!
He said that Curlylocks was coming, too.

STUDENT.

Zounds, how these strapping girls step out!
Come, brother, come, let's join them for a bout.
A beer that stuns, a pipe that bites,
And a wench in her braws, are my delights.

CITIZEN'S DAUGHTER.

These fine young fellows, look where they go!
'Tis a downright shame, when they might know
The best of company, if they please,
To be running after such drabs as these!

SECOND STUDENT (*to the first*).

Not quite so fast! Behind us, yonder, see,
A brace of wenches rigged out smart and neat!
One lives almost next door to me,
And on the girl I'm very sweet.
For all their looking so demure,
They'll take us with them presently, I'm sure.

FIRST STUDENT.

No, no! all prudes are bores. Quick, come away,
Or we shall let the game slip! 'Tis confessed,
The hand that twirls the mop on Saturday
Fondles on Sunday with peculiar zest.

CITIZEN.

What, our new burgomaster? Nay,
He is a man I cannot bear.
He grows more overbearing every day,
Since he was called into the chair.
And what, pray, does he for the town?
Are things not daily growing worse?
Are we not more and more kept down,
And pulled at more and more in purse?

BEGGAR (*sings*).

Kind sirs, and ladies fair and sweet,
With rosy cheeks and handsome dresses,

Look down upon me, I entreat,
Observe, and lighten my distresses.
In pity listen to my voice!
Free hands make merry hearts and gay;
So make this day, when all rejoice,
To me a very harvest-day.

SECOND CITIZEN.

There's nothing more my heart on Sundays cheers,
Or holidays, than a gossip about war
And warlike rumours, when the peoples far
Away in Turkey all are by the ears.
We by the window stand, toss off our glass,
And down the river watch the painted vessels gliding;
Then home at evening merrily we pass,
And bless the comforts of a peace abiding.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Ay, neighbour, nor care I what lengths they go.
Zounds, they may cleave each other's pates, they may,
And turn the whole world topsy-turvy, so
They leave things here at home to jog on the old way.

OLD WOMAN (*to the Citizen's Daughters*).

Heyday! How smart! The pretty dears! Who'd not
Be fairly smitten, now, that met you?
You needn't be so haughty, though, God wot!
What you desire I know the way to get you.

CITIZEN'S DAUGHTER.

Come, Agatha! I'd rather not be seen to greet
A witch like this upon the public street;
But on Saint Andrew's Eve she let me see
In flesh and blood my lover that's to be.

THE OTHER.

Mine, too, she showed me in the glass,
A soldier, one of a dare-devil set;
Here, there, all wheres I seek him, but, alas!
I have not come across him yet.

SOLDIERS (*sing*).

Towns, with loud defiance sent
Down from tower and battlement;
Maidens, rosy as the morn,
Flashing round them looks of scorn,
These alike for us have charms,
Sound alike the cry, "To arms!"
When such glorious prizes call us,
Death nor danger can appal us.

When we hear the trumpets blow,
On to death or bliss we go!
What is like the soldier's trade?
What can match such escalade?
Forted towns and maidens tender
Must alike to us surrender.
When such glorious prizes call us,
Death nor danger can appal us.

CHORUS.

Maids or widows may be sighing,
On we march with colours flying!

FAUST.

Freed from the ice are river and rill
By the quickening glance of the gracious Spring;
Green with promise are valley and hill.
Old winter, palsied and shivering,
Back has crept to his mountains bleak,
And sends from them, as he flies appalled,

Showers of impotent hail, to streak
The fields that are green as emerald.
But the sun no shimmer of whiteness brooks;
The earth is through all her pores alive,
Budding and bursting, and all things strive
To enliven with colours their winterly looks;
And the landscape, though bare of flowers, makes cheer
With people dressed out in their holiday gear.
Turn round, and from this height look down
Over the vineyards upon the town!
A motley medley is making its way
Out from the murky wide-mouthed gate.
Blithely they bask in the sun to-day.
The Saviour's rising they celebrate,
For they have risen themselves, I ween;
From the close, damp rooms of their hovels mean,
From the bonds of business, and labour, and care,
From the gables and roofs that oppress them there,
From the stifling closeness of street and lane,
From the churches' gloom-inspiring night,
They all have emerged into the light.
But, see, how they are spreading amain
Across the gardens and fields, and how
The river, as far as the eye can note,
Is all alive with shallop and boat!
And look! the last departing now,
Laden so deeply it scarce can float.
Far up on the hills as the pathways run,
Gay dresses are glistering in the sun.
Hark now the din of the village! Here
Is the people's true heaven. With hearty glee,
Little and great, how they shout and cheer!
Here I am man, here such dare be.

WAGNER.

To walk about with you, sir doctor, so
Is honour, yea, and profit. Still, were I alone,

I would not here be loitering thus, I own,
Seeing of all that's coarse I am the foe.
Your fiddling, shouting, skittle-playing, all
Are noises which I loathe and quite resent.
These creatures rave, as if the devil drove, and call
Their riot song, forsooth, and merriment.

PEASANTS UNDER THE LINDEN TREE.

Dance and Song.

The shepherd for the dance was dressed;
All tricked out in his Sunday best,
With ribbons gay and sightly.
Thronged round the linden lass and lad,
And all were dancing there like mad,
Huzza! huzza!
Hip! hip! huzza!
The fiddle-bow went sprightly.

Into the thick of them he paced,
And clipped a damsel round the waist,
His arms about her bending;
The buxom wench turned round and said,
"You stupid oaf, where were you bred?"
Huzza! huzza!
Hip! hip! huzza!
"Your manners, sir, want mending!"

But faster grew the fun, and right
And left they wheeled; it was a sight
To see the kirtles flying!
And they grew red, and they grew warm,
And then they rested, arm in arm,
Huzza! huzza!
Hip! hip! huzza!
Such panting, and such sighing!

"Hold off your saucy hands! You men
Are all deceit and falsehood when
You find a girl undoubting."
But he coaxed her, and she stepped aside,
While from the linden echoed wide,
Huzza! huzza!
Hip! hip! huzza!
The fiddling and the shouting.

OLD PEASANT.

Sir doctor, this is kind of you,
To think no scorn of us to-day;
And you such a grand scholar too,
To mix with simple folks this way!
Here, take this jug, 'tis handsome ware,
Nor is the liquor of the worst,
I pledge you in it, with the prayer,
It may not only quench your thirst,
But that each drop within it may
Add to your life another day!

FAUST.

Right gladly I obey your call,
And drink, with thanks, good health to all!
[*The people gather round him in a circle.*

OLD PEASANT.

Indeed this is most kindly done,
To mingle in our mirth to-day.
Ah, sir, you stood our friend in times
When we were anything but gay.
There's many a hale man standing here,
Your father rescued from the clutch
Of raging fever, when he stayed
The plague that wasted us so much.

Though but a lad, from house to house
You sought the sick and dying too:
They bore out many stark and stiff,
But nothing ever ailed with you.
Your trials many were and sore,
You bore them with a spirit brave,
And the great Saviour of us all
Saved him that lent a hand to save.

ALL.

Health to the trusty friend, and may
He live to help us many a day!

FAUST.

To Him above be homage paid,
Who only counsel can, or aid!

[*Walks on with* WAGNER.

WAGNER.

What must you feel, to think, illustrious man,
This crowd reveres you with a love so deep?
Oh, happy, who from his endowments can
So fair a harvest of advantage reap!
The father points you to his son,
The people whisper, crowd, and run,
The fiddle stops, and lad and lass
Break up the dance midway to stare;
They stand in rows for you to pass,
Their caps fly up into the air;
Upon their knees they dropped, almost
As though it were the passing of the Host.

FAUST.

Some few steps farther, up to yonder stone!
Here will we rest, and taste the evening air:

Ofttimes I sat here, wrapt in thought, alone,
And racked myself with fasting and with prayer.
Brimmed full with hope, in faith unwavering,
By tears and sighs and beatings of the breast
From the great Lord of Heaven I sought to wring
Cessation of that devastating pest.
Like mockery now rings yonder crowd's applause.
Oh, could you look into my soul, and read
How little worthy son or father was
Of such repute as they to us decreed!
My father was a good man, not too bright,
Who, by strange notions of his own deluded,
In all good faith, with patience infinite,
On Nature and her sacred circles brooded;
Who shut himself with his adepts away
In a laboratory, black, grim, and mystic,
And fused and fused, by rule and recipe,
Things that by nature are antagonistic.
The Lion Red, bold wooer, bolder mate,
In tepid bath was to the Lily married,
And both were then by open fire-flame straight
From one bride-chamber to another harried.
Thus in due time the Youthful Queen, inside
The glass retort, in motley colours hovered:
This was the medicine; the patients died,
And no one thought of asking who recovered.
So 'mongst these hills and vales our hell-broths wrought
More havoc, brought more victims to the grave,
By many, than the pestilence had brought.
To thousands I myself the poison gave:
They pined and perished; I live on, to hear
Their reckless murderers' praises far and near.

WAGNER.

But why let this distress you, — why?
Can any honest man do more

Than conscientiously to ply
His craft as by its masters plied before?
If you, as youth, revere your father, you
Of course accept from him what he can teach;
If you, as man, see farther, wider too,
Your son in turn a higher mark may reach.

FAUST.

O happy he who still can hope
Out of this sea of error to arise!
We long to use what lies beyond our scope,
Yet cannot use even what within it lies.
But let us not, by saddening thoughts like these,
The blessing of this happy hour o'errun.
See, how they gleam, the green-girt cottages,
Fired by the radiance of the evening sun!
It slopes, it sets. Day wanes. On with a bound
It speeds, and lo! a new world is alive!
O God, for wings to lift me from the ground,
Onward, still onward, after it to strive!
Beneath me, I should see, as on I pressed,
The hushed world ever bathed in evening's beams,
Each mountain-top on fire, each vale at rest,
The silver brook flow into golden streams.
Nor peak nor mountain-chasm should then defeat
My onward course, so godlike and so free.
Lo, with its bays all winking in the heat,
Bursts on my wonder-smitten eyes the sea!
But now the god appears about to sink!
Fresh impulse stirs me, not to be confined.
I hurry on, his deathless light to drink,
The day before me, and the night behind,
The heavens above me, and the waves below.
A lovely dream! Meanwhile, the sun his face
Has hid. Ah, with the spirit's wings will no
Corporeal wings so readily keep pace!

Yet is the yearning with us all inborn,
Upwards and onwards to be struggling still,
When over us we hear the lark, at morn,
Lost in the sky, her quivering carol trill;
When o'er the mountains' pine-clad summits drear
The eagle wheels afar on outstretched wing,
When over flat and over mere
The crane is homewards labouring.

WAGNER.

I too have often had my whims and moods,
But never was by such an impulse stirred.
A man soon looks his fill at fields and woods;
The wings I ne'er shall envy of a bird.
How differently the spirit's pure delights
Waft us from book to book, from page to page!
They give a beauty to the winter's nights,
A cheerful glow that can its chill assuage.
And some fine manuscript when you unroll,
Ah, then all heaven descends into your soul!

FAUST.

One only aspiration thou hast known,
Oh, never seek to know the other, never!
Two souls, alas! within my bosom throne,
That each from other fiercely longs to sever.
One, with a passionate love that never tires,
Cleaves as with cramps of steel to things of earth,
The other upwards through earth's mists aspires
To kindred regions of a loftier worth.
Oh, in the air if spirits be,
That float 'twixt earth and heaven, and lord it there,
Then from your golden haze descend, and me
Far hence to fields of new existence bear!
Yes, if a magic mantle were but mine,
To stranger lands to waft me at my call,

I'd prize it more than robes of costliest shine,
I would not change it for a monarch's pall.

WAGNER.

The too familiar throng invoke not, who,
In trailing vapours spread upon the wind,
Come trooping from all quarters, where they brew
Unnumbered plagues and perils for mankind.
The sharp-fanged spirits of the North, lo, they
Come rushing down on you with arrowy tongues;
Those of the East, they parch you dry as hay,
And suck a slow nutrition from your lungs.
If from the desert sands the South sends out
Those that heap fire on fire around your brain,
The West brings those that first refresh, no doubt,
But end with drowning you, and field, and plain.
They watch our every word, on mischief bent,
Obey each wish, yet turn them all awry,
They look as if from heaven expressly sent,
And lisp like very angels when they lie.
But let us go! the earth is wrapt in gray;
The air grows chill, the mists are falling.
'Tis evening makes us prize our homes. But, hey!
Why stare you thus, as at some sight appalling?
What in the dusk there fills you with such trouble?

FAUST.

Seest thou yon black dog coursing through the stubble?

WAGNER.

I saw him long ago, but heeded not the least.

FAUST.

Observe him well! For what tak'st thou the beast?

WAGNER.

Why, for a poodle, trying to hark back,
In doglike wise, upon his master's track.

FAUST.

See how he doth in spiral circles make
A circuit round us, wheeling nigh and nigher!
And after him — it can be no mistake —
There follows, as he runs, a trail of fire.

WAGNER.

Nought but a coal-black poodle can I see;
It must some optical illusion be.

FAUST.

To me it seems, that round our feet he draws
Fine magic toils to snare us, fast and faster.

WAGNER.

Round us he runs perplexed and shy, because
He sees two strangers here, and not his master.

FAUST.

The circle narrows. He touches us almost.

WAGNER.

'Tis a mere dog, you see, and not a ghost.
He growls, hangs back, lies down, begins to whine,
Waggles his tail — all practices canine.

FAUST.

Here, go along with us! Come hither, come!

WAGNER.

A merry beast it is, and frolicsome.
Stand still, and he sits up and begs,
Speak to him, and he jumps upon your legs;
Lose anything, he'll find it for you quick,
And leap into the water for your stick.

FAUST.

Thou'rt right! I find not of a spirit here
One single trace: 'tis training all, that's clear.

WAGNER.

The dog, if well brought up, may be
Even for the sage good company:
Your favour, possibly your thanks,
He certainly deserves to earn;
The students, sir, have taught him all these pranks,
Which he has shown much aptitude to learn.
[*They pass in at the gate of the town.*

Scene III. — Faust's *Study.*

FAUST (*entering with the poodle*).

Meadow I've left, and dale and hill,
In night's deep gloom arrayed, that wakes
Within us, with a solemn thrill,
The mood which most of heaven partakes:
Each wild desire is lulled to rest,
That rent the heart, or racked the brow;
The love of man now fires the breast,
The love of God is kindling now.

Peace, dog, be quiet! Your restlessness wearies!
Why sniff you so at the threshold there?

Down, sir, behind the stove! See, here is
The best of my cushions, to make you a lair.
We did not object to your coursing and leaping,
It served to amuse us up there on the hill,
But if you are to remain in my keeping,
You must learn, like a well-mannered guest, to be still.

Ah! when within our narrow room
The friendly lamp again is lit,
Then from our spirit flies the gloom
That dulled and overshadowed it.
Reason begins once more to speak,
And Hope again to plume her wings;
After life's streams we pant, yea, seek
The very fountain whence it springs.

Cease, dog, to growl! The brutish sound
Jars with the hallowed tones that all
My soul at this sweet hour enthral!
We think it not strange, when men around
Deride the things they comprehend not,
And all that is fairest and best contemn,
For how should such things their vile natures offend not?
Would the hound be snarling at these, like them?

But ah! I feel, strive as I may, that peace
Will well forth from my bosom nevermore.
Yet, wherefore should its streams so quickly cease,
And we lie parched and panting as before?
So oft have I been doomed thus low to fall.
Yet for this want we may have compensation;
We learn to prize the supernatural,
And cry with yearning hearts for Revelation,
Which nowhere burns more worthily and clear,
Than all through the New Testament. So here

I turn me to the primal text, elate
With a wild longing, line for line,
The great original divine
Into my own dear German to translate.
[*Opens the volume, and prepares to write.*
"In the Beginning was the Word!" 'Tis writ.
Here on the threshold I must pause, perforce;
And who will help me onwards in my course?
No, by no possibility is't fit
I should the naked Word so highly rate.
Some other way must I the words translate,
If by the Spirit rightly I be taught.
"In the Beginning was the Sense!" 'Tis writ.
The first line ponder well. Is it
The Sense, which is of each created thing
The primal cause, and regulating spring?
It should stand thus: "In the Beginning was
The Force!" Yet even as I write, I pause.
A something warns me, this will not content me.
Lo! help is from the Spirit sent me!
I see my way; with lightning speed
The meaning flashes on my sight,
And with assured conviction thus I write:
"In the Beginning was the Deed!"

My chamber if you wish to share,
This howling, poodle, straight forbear,
This barking, and this riot!
To brook a comrade so unquiet
Is more than I am able.
Here both of us cannot remain,
And, though it goes against my grain
To be inhospitable,
There is the door, and you are free
To go! But what is this I see?
How can such transformation be?
Is it a real thing, or throws

Some glamour over me its spells?
How long and broad my poodle grows!
It rises, it dilates and swells.
This is no dog: what can it be,
This fiend I have brought home with me?
Now with his fiery eyes, and rows
On rows of horrid teeth, he shows
Like any hippopotamus!
Ha! Now I know you! Is it thus?
For such half-hell-begotten brood
The seal of Solomon is good.

SPIRITS (*in the passage outside*).

One we know well
Is caught fast within there.
Mind what you're doing,
No one go in there!
An old lynx of hell,
Like a fox in a gin, there
Is quaking and stewing.
Have a care! Have a care!
Unseen, through the air,
Flit ye and hover,
To and fro, round about,
Now under, now over,
And he will get out!

Aid him all, if aid ye may.
He has done us ere to-day
Pleasures manifold and rare!
Help him, then, in his despair!

FAUST.

To grapple with the monster, I
The Spell of the Four at first will try.

Salamander, he shall glow,
Into streams Undine flow,
Vanish Sylph, and, Kobold, double
Shall his turmoil be and trouble!

If a man know not the lore
Of the Elemental Four,
The power of each and property,
Of the world of spirits he
Never will the master be.

Hence, as ye came, in flash and flame,
Salamander!
Flow out and be seen a rushing stream
Undine!
Blaze on the air a meteor fair,
Sylph!
Us with timely help befriend,
Incubus! Incubus!
Come forth, come forth, and make an end!

No one of the Four is lodged in the beast.
'Tis plain, I have not touched the case.
Quite still he lies, and grins in my face,
His withers I have not wrung in the least.
Now shall ye hear me, whatever ye are,
Conjure with a spell more potent by far.

Com'st thou here, from hell's confine
A fugitive, behold this sign,
Holy emblem, 'neath whose power
All the fiends of darkness cower!
Its bristles rise! Behold it now to monstrous size dilate!
Thou thing accursed and reprobate!
Canst thou read the holy token,
Him that never was create,

Him that never may be spoken,
All from sky to sky pervading,
Vilely done to death degrading?

Spellbound behind the stove it stands,
And like an elephant expands!
It fills the alcove up complete:
Into a mist 'twill melt away.
Ascend not to the ceiling! Lay
Thyself down at the master's feet.
Thou seest, I threaten not in vain.
I'll scorch thee up with holy fire!
For that dread light best not remain,
Which burns with threefold glow! Retire,
Nor wait till I, thou spawn of hell,
Let loose on thee my mightiest spell!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*comes forward, as the mist subsides, in the dress of a travelling scholar, from behind the stove*).

What is the use of all this mighty stir?
Can I in anything oblige you, sir?

FAUST.

So this, then, was the kernel of the brute!
A travelling scholar? Here's a pleasant jest!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Your learned worship humbly I salute.
You gave me a fine sweating, I protest.

FAUST.

What is thy name?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Methinks the question's mean,
For one who holds the Word so very cheap,
Who, scorning all mere semblances, has been
Brooding on things in their quintessence deep!

FAUST.

Of gentlemen like you one may
The nature mostly from the names surmise,
Where what ye are they all too plainly say.
When they "Destroyer" style you, "Flygod, Prince of Lies!"
Speak, then! Who art thou?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Part of the power that still
Produces Good, while still devising ill.

FAUST.

A rare enigma! Say what it implies.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The spirit I that evermore denies.
And rightly am I thus employed,
For surely nought was e'er begot
But it deserved to be destroyed;
So were it better, things should not
Be into being brought at all.
Thus all these matters, which you call
Sin, Mischief, — Evil in a word,
Are my congenial element.

FAUST.

I heard
You call yourself a part, yet see
You stand there whole as whole can be.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Truth, truth, I vow, all truth and modesty!
Though man, that Microcosm of Folly, seem
A perfect whole to his own self-esteem,
Myself I, being less pretentious, call
Part of the part, which at the first was all;
Part of the darkness, from whose womb sprang light,
Proud light, which now doth with its dam contest
Her ancient rank, the space she filled of right;
And yet it can't succeed, for, strive its best,
It cleaves to bodies, fettered to them fast:
It streams from bodies, makes them fair and bright;
A body intercepts its passage, so
I hope, when bodies come to grief at last,
It will with them to sheer perdition go.

FAUST.

Your high vocation now I understand.
You find you can't annihilate wholesale,
So on a smaller scale you try your hand.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And let me own, to very small avail.
That which is nothing's opposite,
This something, this great lumbering world, although
I've launched at it, with all my might,
Storm, deluge, earthquake, levin-brand,
I can't effect its overthrow;
It hangs together still, good sea and land.
And then these misbegots accurst,

This spawn of brutes and men, alas!
Defy me, let me try my worst.
How many have I sent to grass!
Yet young fresh blood, do what I will,
Keeps ever circulating still.
In water, in the earth, in air,
In wet, dry, warm, cold, everywhere,
Germs without number are unfurled.
And but for fire and fire alone,
There would be nothing in the world,
That I could truly call my own.

FAUST.

So, that cold devil's fist of thine
Thou dost not scruple to oppose
To the unsleeping power benign,
Beneath whose breath all lives and grows;
It laughs to scorn your threats malign.
Strange son of chaos, hadst thou not
Best start upon another tack?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

It certainly is worth a thought!
More about this when I come back,
But for the present have I leave,
Your leave, to take myself away?

FAUST.

Why you should ask, I can't conceive.
We're strangers from this hour no more;
So visit me in future, pray,
Just when and how the fancy strikes you.
Here is the window, here the door,
And there a chimney, if it likes you.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'd very quickly make my exit,
But that a trifling hindrance checks it;
The wizard's foot, — alas! 'tis true —
Upon your threshold —

FAUST.

Ha, 'tis well!
The Pentagram perplexes you.
But answer me, thou son of hell,
If that can thrust you backward, how
Contrived you to get in but now?
How came a spirit so astute
To tumble into such a snare?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You'll find, if you look closely to 't,
It is not drawn with proper care.
The outer angle's incomplete.
You may discover at a glance,
The lines converge, but do not meet.

FAUST.

That was indeed a lucky chance!
So you should be my prisoner, then?
Most rare good fortune, truly!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

When
The poodle bounded in, he took
No heed of what he was about.
Now things wear quite another look;
The devil's in, and can't get out.

FAUST.

Why through the window not withdraw?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of fiends and goblins 'tis a law,
Get in howe'er they please, but so
As they came in, out they must go.
Free in the first choice, in the last
We're very slaves!

FAUST.

So even hell
Has got its legal code. 'Tis well.
Then with you gentlemen a fast
And binding contract may be made?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ay, and implicitly obeyed.
Whate'er is promised you by us
You to the letter shall enjoy,
Without abatement or alloy.
A theme too grave this to discuss
So hurriedly; when next we meet,
We'll talk it fully out; but now
I beg, nay, earnestly entreat,
This once you'll let me make my bow.

FAUST.

One moment, by your leave! I burn
For such rare news as yours must be.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Let me go now, I'll soon return,
And then ask what you like of me.

FAUST.

Of choice, and not by my device,
You ran yourself into this plight.
Once catch the devil, hold him tight!
He'll scarcely let you catch him twice.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, if you wish it, here I stay,
On one condition, that the while
I with my sleights familiar may
Your moments worthily beguile.

FAUST.

Agreed! you have my leave, — but mind
Your sleights are of the pleasing kind!

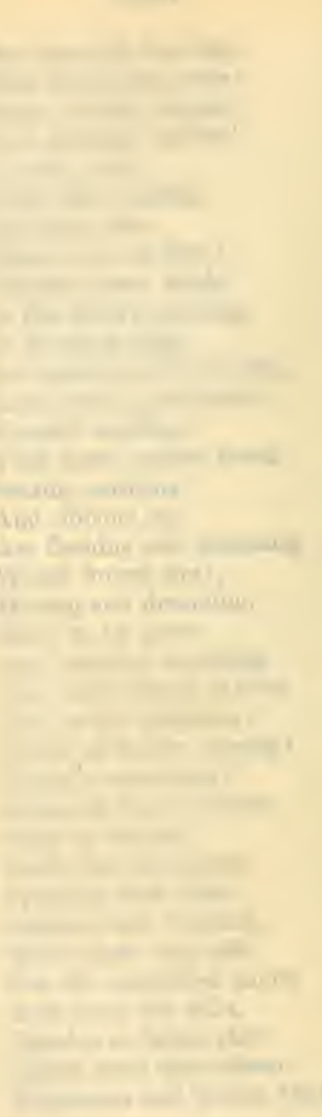
MEPHISTOPHELES.

Within this hour, my friend, be sure,
You for your senses shall procure
More than you heretofore have found
Within the year's unvaried round.
The songs my dainty spirits sing,
The lovely visions which they bring,
Are no mere empty glamour, no!
Your very smell entranced shall be,
Your palate lapped in ecstasy,
Your every nerve with rapture glow.
No preparation here we need.
We're in our places, so proceed!

SPIRITS.

Disappear, disappear,
Ye dark arches drear!
Let the blue sky of heaven
Look down on us here,

The beautiful blue sky,
With friendliest cheer!
Hence, clouds, begone,
That gloomily darkle!
Lo now, anon,
Little stars sparkle,
Mellower suns
Shine in on us here!
Heaven's sons, bright
In the spirit's arraying,
In hovering flight
Are bending and swaying.
Souls with a passionate
Upward aspiring,
View them, pursue them,
Soaring untiring!
And ribbons gay
Are flashing and gleaming,
Where lovers stray,
Musing and dreaming,
Stray on by grove
And meadow, requiting
Love with return of love,
Life for life plighting!
Bower on bower shining!
Tendrils entwining!
Grapes in huge clusters
Piled up profuse,
Under the wine-press
Spurting their juice.
Seething and foaming,
Wines gush into rills,
O'er the enamelled stones
Rush from the hills,
Broaden to lakes, that
Reflect from their sheen
Mountains and brakes, that



"He sleeps! Well done, ye little airy sprites!"

Photogravure after the painting by A. Liezen-Meyer

Are mantled in green.
And birds of all feather,
Pure rapture inhaling,
Sunwards are sailing,
Sailing together,
On to the isles
That lie smiling and dreaming,
Where the bright billows
Are rippling and gleaming;
Where we see jocund bands
Dance on before us,
Over the meadow-lands
Shouting in chorus,
All in the free air
Every way rambling;
Some up the mountains
Climbing and scrambling;
Some o'er the lakes and seas
Floating and swimming,
Others upon the breeze
Flying and skimming;
All to the sources
Of life pressing onward,
Flushed by the forces
That carry them sunward;
On to the measureless
Spaces above them,
On where the stars bless
The spirits that love them.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

He sleeps! Well done, ye little airy sprites!
You've fairly lullabied his wits to sleep:
I'm in your debt for these melodious sleights.
Thou'rt not the man, at least not yet, to keep
The devil in thy clutch. Around him play
With soothing visions from the realm of dream;

Across his brain let wild illusions stray,
And fool his fancy with their meteor gleam!
Ha! tooth of rat, methinks, would serve me well,
To break me up this threshold's spell.
No need of lengthened conjuration. Hark!
There rustles one my voice will quickly mark!

The master of the rats and mice,
Of flies, and frogs, and bugs, and lice,
Commands you straightway to appear,
And nibble at this threshold here,
Where now he smears it o'er with oil.
Ha! Here you are! Now, to your toil!
The point that kept me back lies there
Just in the front, beside the stair.
One nibble more, your task's complete!
Now, Faustus, now dream on till next we meet.
[*Exit.*

FAUST (*awaking*).

Am I again befooled? Vanish they so,
The throng of spirits that my fancy shaped?
Was then the fiend a dream, a lying show,
And that a poodle which but now escaped?

ACT II.

Scene I. — Faust's *Study.*

Faust, Mephistopheles.

FAUST.

A knock? Come in! Again my quiet broken?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis I.

FAUST.

Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thrice must the words be spoken.

FAUST.

Come in, then!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*entering*).

So! That job's discussed.
We shall be firmer friends, I trust;
For, to dispel your fancies grim,
Behold me here, a springald trim,
In jerkin red, and laced with gold,
A cape of stiffest silk, a bold
Cock-feather in my cap; and see!
A long sharp rapier to boot!
Now, prithee, be advised by me,
And get just such another suit;
So, casting every trammel loose,
You'll learn what life is, and its use.

FAUST.

In every dress I'm sure to feel the dire
Constraints of earthly life severely:
I am too old to trifle merely,
Too young to be without desire.
What from the world have I to gain?
"Thou shalt refrain! Thou shalt refrain!"
This is the everlasting song
That's hummed and droned in every ear,
Which every hour, our whole life long,
Is croaked to us in cadence drear.
I wake each morning in despair,
And bitter tears could weep, to see the sun

Dawn on the day, that in its round will ne'er
Accomplish one poor wish of mine, not one;—
Yea, that with froward captiousness impairs
Each joy, of which I've dreamt, of half its zest,
And with life's thousand mean and paltry cares
Clogs the creations of my busy breast.
And when at evening's weary close
I lay me down in anguish on my bed,
There, even there, for me is no repose,
Scared as I am by visions wild and dread.
The god, who in my breast abides,
Through all its depths can stir my soul,
My every faculty he sways and guides,
Yet can he not what lies without control.
And thus by life, as by a load, oppressed,
I long for death, existence I detest.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And yet death never is a wholly welcome guest!

FAUST.

Oh, happy he around whose brows he winds
In victory's glorious hour the blood-stained bays,
Whom on the bosom of his girl he finds,
Warm from the dance's wild and maddening maze!
Oh, had it been, 'neath that high spirit's might,
My fate, while tranced in bliss, in death to sink!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yet was there one, who on a certain night
A certain dark-brown mixture feared to drink.

FAUST.

You have a taste, it seems, for playing spy.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Omniscient, no! Still few things 'scape my eye.

FAUST.

If, when my brain was racked and reeling,
A sweet and old familiar chime
Beguiled my all of childish feeling
With memories of a happier time,
Now do I curse whate'er doth pen
With wizard coil these souls of ours,
And chains them to this dreary den
With cozening and deceitful powers.
And chief be curst the proud conceit,
Which girds our minds as with a fence;
Curst be the semblances that cheat,
And play and palter with our sense!
Curst be the false and flattering dream
Of fame — a name beyond the grave,
Curst all that ours we fondly deem,
As wife and child, as plough and slave!
Be Mammon curst, when he with pelf
Inspires to deeds were else renown,
When he, to sot and pamper self,
Makes silken smooth our couch of down!
On wine's balsamic juice a curse,
A curse on love's ecstatic thrall,
A curse on hope, on faith, and worse
On patience be my curse than all!

Chorus of Invisible Spirits.

Woe, woe!
Thus hast laid it low,
The beautiful world,
With merciless blow.
It totters, it crumbles, it tumbles abroad,
Shattered and crushed by a demigod.

We trail
The ruins to chaos away,
And wail
The beauty that's lost, well-a-day!
Of the children of clay,
Thou mighty one, thou,
Fairer, more glorious, now
Build it once more,
Within thine own bosom build it up! Here
A new life-career
With quickened sense
Commence!
And songs, unheard before,
Shall chime upon thine ear!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These my tiny spirits be.
Hark, with what sagacity
They advise thee to pursue
Action, pleasure ever new!
Out into the world so fair
They would lure and lead thee hence,
From this lonely chamber, where
Stagnate life and soul and sense.

No longer trifle with the wretchedness,
That, like a vulture, gnaws your life away!
The worst society will teach you this,
You are a man 'mongst men, and feel as they.
Yet 'tis not meant, I pray you, see,
To thrust you 'mong the rabble rout; —
I'm none of your great folks, no doubt,
But if, in fellowship with me,
To range through life you are content,
I will most cheerfully consent

To be your own upon the spot.
I am your chum. You'd rather not?
Well! If your scruples it will save,
I am your servant, yea, your slave!

FAUST.

And in return what must I do for you?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, time enough to talk of that!

FAUST.

Nay, nay!
The devil's selfish — is and was alway —
And is not like for mere God's sake to do
A liberal turn to any child of clay.
Out with the terms, and plainly! Such as thou
Are dangerous servants in a house, I trow.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I bind myself to serve you here, — to do
Your bidding promptly, whatsoe'er it be,
And, when we come together yonder, you
Are then to do the same for me.

FAUST.

I prize that yonder at a rush!
Only this world to atoms crush,
And then that other may arise!
From earth my every pleasure flows,
Yon Sun looks down upon my woes;
Let me but part myself from those,
Then come what may, in any guise!
To idle prate I'll close mine ears,
If we hereafter hate or love,

Or if there be in yonder spheres,
As here, an Under and Above!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You're in the proper mood to venture! Bind
Yourself, and pleasure in my sleights you'll find,
While this life lasts. I'll give you more
Than eye of man hath ever seen before.

FAUST.

What wilt thou give, thou sorry devil? When
Were the aspiring souls of men
Fathomed by such a thing as thee?
Oh, thou hast food that satisfieth never,
Gold, ruddy gold thou hast, that restlessly
Slips, like quicksilver, through the hand for ever;
A game, where we must losers be;
A girl, that, on my very breast,
My neighbour woos with smile and wink;
Fame's rapturous flash of godlike zest,
That, meteor-like, is doomed to sink.
Show me the fruit that, ere 'tis plucked, doth rot,
And trees that every day grow green anew!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Such task as this affrights me not.
I have such treasures at command for you.
But, my good friend, the time draws nigh
When we may banquet on the best in peace!

FAUST.

If e'er at peace on sluggard's couch I lie,
Then may my life upon the instant cease!
Cheat thou me ever by thy glozing wile,
So that I cease to scorn myself, or e'er

My senses with a perfect joy beguile,
Then be that day my last! I offer fair,
How say'st thou?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Done!

FAUST.

My hand upon it! There!
If to the passing moment e'er I say,
"Oh, linger yet, thou art so fair!"
Then cast me into chains you may,
Then will I die without a care!
Then may the death-bell sound its call,
Then art thou from thy service free,
The clock may stand, the index fall,
And time and tide may cease for me!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Think well; we sha'n't forget the terms you name.

FAUST.

Your perfect right I must allow.
Not rashly to the pact I came.
I am a slave as I am now;
Yours or another's, 'tis to me the same!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Then at the Doctors' feast this very day
Will I my post, as your attendant, take.
Just one thing more! To guard against mistake,
Oblige me with a line or two, I pray.

FAUST.

Pedant, must thou have writing, too?
Hast thou no true man, or man's promise, known?
Is not my word of mouth enough for you,
To pledge my days for all eternity?
Does not the universe go raving on,
In all its ever-eddying currents, free
To pass from change to change, and I alone,
Shall a mere promise curb or fetter me?
Yet doth man's heart so hug the dear deceit,
Who would its hold without a pang undo?
Blest he, whose soul is with pure truth replete,
No sacrifice shall ever make him rue.
But, oh, your stamped and scribbled parchment sheet
A spectre is, which all men shrink to view.
The word dies ere it quits the pen,
And wax and sheepskin lord it then.
What would you have, spirit of ill!
Brass, marble, parchment, paper? — Say,
Am I to write with pen, or style, or graver?
I care not — choose whiche'er you will.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why throw your eloquence away,
Or give it such a very pungent savour?
Pshaw! Any scrap will do — 'tis quite the same —
With the least drop of blood just sign your name.

FAUST.

If that will make you happy, why, a claim
So very whimsical I'll freely favour.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Blood is a juice of quite peculiar kind.

FAUST.

Fear not that I the compact will evade!
My life's whole struggle, heart and mind,
Chimes with the promise I have made.
Too high I've soared — too proudly dreamt,
I'm only peer for such as thee;
The Mighty Spirit spurns me with contempt,
And Nature veils her face from me.
Thought's chain is snapt; — for many a day
I've loathed all knowledge every way.
So quench we now our passion's fires
In sense and sensual delights,
Unveil all hidden magic sleights,
To minister to our desires!
Let us plunge in the torrent of time, and range
Through the weltering chaos of chance and change,
Then pleasure and pain, disaster and gain,
May course one another adown my brain.
Change and excitement may work as they can,
Rest there is none for the spirit of man.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To you is set nor goal nor stint.
If you'd sip the sweetest of everything,
And hawk at pleasure upon the wing,
Much joy, I'm sure, I wish you in't.
Only fall to, and don't be coy.

FAUST.

Again I say, my thoughts are not of joy.
I devote myself to the whirl and roar,
To the bliss that throbs with a pulse like pain,
To the hate that we dote on and fondle o'er,
The defeat that inspirits both nerves and brain.
Of its passion for knowledge cured, my soul

Henceforth shall expand to all forms of woe,
And all that is all human nature's dole
In my heart of hearts I shall feel and know;
With highest, lowest, in spirit I shall cope;
Pile on my breast their joys, their griefs, their cares,
So all men's souls shall come within my scope,
And mine at last go down a wreck like theirs.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, trust to me, who have through many a year
On this tough morsel chewed the cud,
That from the cradle to the bier
No man of mortal flesh and blood
Hath e'er digested the old leaven.
Trust one of us, this whole so vast
Is only for the God of Heaven!
In everlasting radiance He is glassed,
Us hath He into outer darkness cast,
And you, you mortals, only may
See day succeed to night, and night to day.

FAUST.

Nay, but I will.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That's well enough to say;
Only I don't quite see my way.
Art's long, time short. You'd best permit
Yourself to be advised a bit.
Club with a poet; soaring free,
Let him the realm of fancy sweep,
And every noble quality
Upon your honoured forehead heap;
The lion's magnanimity,
The fleetness of the hind,

The fiery blood of Italy,
The Northern's constant mind.
Let him for you the art divine,
High aims with cunning to combine,
And, with young blood at fever full,
To love on system and by rule.
A gentleman of such a kind
I should myself be glad to find,
And, 'sooth, by me so rare a wight
Should be Sir Microcosmus hight.

FAUST.

What am I, then, if never by no art
The crown of mortal nature may be gained,
For which our every energy is strained?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thou art, when all's done, what thou art.
A periwig with countless ringlets buy,
Array thy feet in socks a cubit high,
Still, still thou wilt remain just what thou art.

FAUST.

'Tis true, I feel! In vain have I amassed
Within me all the treasures of man's mind,
And when I pause, and sit me down at last,
No new power welling inwardly I find;
A hairbreadth is not added to my height.
I am no nearer to the Infinite.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Good sir, you view these matters just
As any common mortal would;
But take a higher strain we must,
Nor let life's joys our grasp elude.

Why, what the deuce! Sure, foot and hand,
And blood and brain are yours! And what
I can enjoy, control, command,
Is it the less my own for that?
If I for horses six can pay,
Their powers are added to my store;
A proper man I dash away,
As though I had legs twenty-four.
Up, then, no more a dreamer be,
But forth into the world with me!
I tell you what, your speculating wretch
Is like a beast upon a barren waste,
Round, ever round, by an ill spirit chased,
Whilst all about him fair green pastures stretch.

FAUST.

But how begin?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We start at once.
Ugh! what a place of torture dire!
Call you this life — yourself to tire,
And some few youngsters, each a dunce?
Leave that to neighbour Paunch to do.
Why plague yourself with threshing straw?
What's best of all that's known to you,
You dare not tell these striplings raw.
I hear one now upon the stair.

FAUST.

I cannot see him.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Long and late,
Poor boy, he's waited. In despair

We must not send him from the gate.
Give me your cap and gown: the mask,
You'll see, will fit me to a hair.
[*Changes his dress.*
Now leave all to my wit. I ask
But fifteen minutes. Go now! There!
And for our pleasant trip prepare. [*Exit* FAUST.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*putting on* FAUST'S *gown*).

Only scorn reason, knowledge, all that can
Give strength, or might, or dignity to man,
And let thyself be only more and more
Besotted by the spirit of lies
With faith in necromantic lore,
Its shams, delusions, sorceries,
And thou art mine beyond recall!—
Fate to this man a soul has given
That brooks not to be held in thrall,
But onward evermore is driven,
And, on its own mad fancies bent,
In earth's delights finds no content.
Him will I drag through all the fires
Of passions, appetites, desires,
Through all the dull unmeaning round
Of man and woman, sight and sound.
Oh, he shall sprawl, be stunned, stick fast
In sheer bewilderment at last.
His longings infinite to whet,
Dainties and drink shall dance before
His fevered lips; nor shall he get
The peace he'll pray for evermore.
Here and hereafter such as he
Are marked for doom; and even although
He had not sold himself to me,
He must perforce have come to woe.

Enter a STUDENT.

STUDENT.

To town quite recently I came,
And make it, sir, my earliest care
To see and talk with one whose name
Is named with reverence everywhere.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You're too polite! A man you see,
Like scores of other men, in me.
Elsewhere have you not found your way?

STUDENT.

Take me in hand, oh, do, sir, pray!
I've every wish, nay, have, in truth,
A very passion, to be taught,
Some money, too, and health and youth;
My mother scarcely could be brought
To part with me; but come I would,
To learn whate'er 'tis best I should.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

If such be really the case,
You've come to just the proper place.

STUDENT.

Yet I, the honest truth to say,
Already wish myself away!
These walls and lecture-rooms I find
By no means of a pleasant kind.
All is so close, so cramped, so mean,
No trees, nor anything that's green, —
Mewed up in them, my spirits sink;
I neither hear, nor see, nor think.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Habit alone cures that. Just so
The child at first will not, you know,
Take kindly to its mother's breast,
But soon it suckles there with zest.
Even thus at wisdom's breast will you
Each day find pleasure ever new.

STUDENT.

Upon her neck I'll hang with joy; the way
To clamber there, do you, sir, only say.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ere you go further, say, on which
Of all the faculties your fancies pitch.

STUDENT.

Sir, my ambition is to be
A scholar widely read and sound,
All things on earth, in heaven, or sea,
To grasp with comprehensive view,
In short, to master all the round
Of science and of nature too.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You're on the right track; only don't
Get scatter-brained in the pursuit.

STUDENT.

Oh, never fear, sir; — that I won't.
Body and soul I'll buckle to't.
Yet should I like upon occasion
Some freedom, some small relaxation,

When skies are bright, and fields are gay,
Upon a summer's holiday.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Use well your time, — so fast it flies;
Yet Method teaches, in what wise
Of time itself you may make prize.
And, first and foremost to that end,
I counsel you, my dear young friend,
A course of Logic to attend.
Your mind will then be so well braced,
In Spanish boots so tightly laced,
That henceforth, by discretion taught,
'Twill creep along the path of thought,
And not, with all the winds that blow,
Go Will-o'-Wisping to and fro.
Then many a good day will be spent
In teaching that the things you used
To knock off at a stroke, with just
As little thought or pains as went
To eating or to drinking, must
Be by First! Second! Third! produced.
The web of thought, we may assume,
Is like some triumph of the loom,
Where one small simple treddle starts
A thousand threads to motion, — where
The flying shuttle shoots and darts,
Now over here, now under there.
We look, but see not how, so fast
Thread blends with thread, and twines, and mixes,
When lo! one single stroke at last
The thousand combinations fixes;
In steps me then Philosophy, and proves
That, being set in certain grooves,
Things which have passed before your eyes
Could by no chance be otherwise.

The First was so, the Second so,
Ergo the Third and Fourth ensued;
But given no First nor Second, no
Third, yea, nor Fourth had been or could.
Scholars in matters of this kind
Are everywhere profound believers,
Yet none of them, that I can find,
Have signalised themselves as weavers.
He that would study and portray
A living creature, thinks it fit
To start with finding out the way
To drive the spirit out of it.
This done, he holds within his hand
The pieces to be named and stated,
But, ah! the spirit-tie, that spanned
And knit them, has evaporated.
This process chemic science pleases
To call Naturæ Encheiresis,
And, in the very doing so, it
Makes of itself a mock, and does not know it.

STUDENT.

I don't entirely comprehend.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In that respect you'll quickly mend,
When once you learn with true insight
To classify all things aright.

STUDENT.

I'm so perplexed with what you've said,
That just for all the world I feel
As if some clattering mill-wheel
Were turning, turning in my head.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Before all other studies you
Must Metaphysics next pursue.
There see that you profoundly scan
What ne'er was meant for brain of man;
Be thought or no thought in your head,
Fine phrases there will do instead:
And mind, that this half-year in all
You do you're most methodical.
Five hours of lecture daily; so
Be in your seat right to the minute!
Prepare the subject ere you go,
Be thoroughly well read up in it.
Thus see that the professor's stating
No more than all the text-books show;
Yet still write down each word, as though
He were the Holy Ghost dictating.

STUDENT.

No need to say that to me twice.
I see 'tis excellent advice;
For we take home, and study, quite
At ease, what's down in black and white.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

But choose some Faculty.

STUDENT.

At the mere name
Of Jurisprudence I rebel.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In that, I own, you're not so much to blame,
For what that science is, I know full well.

Laws are transmitted, as one sees,
Just like inherited disease.
They're handed down from race to race,
And noiseless glide from place to place.
Reason they turn to nonsense; worse,
They make beneficence a curse!
Ah me! That you're a grandson you,
As long as you're alive, shall rue.
The law which is within us placed
At birth, unhappily about
That law there's never any doubt.

STUDENT.

Your words have heightened my distaste.
Oh, the fortunate man whom you
Vouchsafe to give instruction to!
I almost think Theology
Would be the study best for me.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I should not wish, friend, to mislead you;
Yet in that branch of lore, indeed, you
Will find it hard to keep away
From paths that carry far astray.
In it so much hid poison lies
Which you may fail to recognise,
Nay, will most probably confound
With the true medicine around.
But here again one rule is clear;
To one, and but one guide, give ear,
Take all his words as gospel in,
And swear by them through thick and thin.
As a broad principle, hold on
By words, words, words! So you, anon,
Through their unfailing doors the fane
Of perfect certainty will gain.

STUDENT.

But surely, sir, a meaning should
In words be always understood?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No doubt, no doubt! Yet 'twere absurd
Upon that point to feel too much concern;
Since just where meaning fails, a word
Comes patly in to serve your turn.
Words, my young friend, — why, nothing suits
So well as matter for disputes;
With words your systems you can weave in,
Words are such fine things to believe in,
And from a word no jot or tittle
Can be abstracted, much or little.

STUDENT.

I fear my numerous questions tease you;
Yet once more I must trouble you.
On Medicine I would fain, so please you,
Receive a pregnant word or two.
Three years, they slip away so fast,
And, heavens! the field is quite too vast.
Still with a hint a man may hope
His way with more success to grope.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

This prosing bores me. I must play
The devil now in my own way.
(*Aloud*) Well, any simpleton may seize
The soul of Medicine with ease —
You simply study through and through
The world of man and nature too,
To end with leaving things to God,
To make or mar them. 'Tis in vain

That you go mooning all abroad,
Picking up science grain by grain:
Each man learns only what he can.
But he that has the gift and power
To profit by the passing hour,
He is your proper man!
You're not ill built, — will, I conceive,
Show mettle on occasion due; —
If you but in yourself believe,
Others will then believe in you.
Especially be sure to find
The way to manage the womenkind.
Their everlasting Ohs! and Ahs!
Of this be sure,
Whate'er their fashion or their cause,
All from one point admit of cure.
With air respectful and demure
Approach as they advance, and, mum!
You have them all beneath your thumb.
But a degree must first instil
Conviction in them, that your skill
Surpasses other people's; then
At once they make you free of all
Those tête-â-tête endearments small,
Years scarce secure for other men:
The little pulse adroitly squeeze,
With looks on fire with passion seize
And boldly clasp the tapering waist,
To see if it be tightly laced.

STUDENT.

Oh, that is much more in my way!
One sees at least the where and how.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Dear friend, all theory is gray,
And green life's golden tree.

STUDENT.

I vow,
I'm like one in a dream. Might I
Intrude on you some other time, to hear
Your wisdom make the grounds of all this clear?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

So far as I can serve you, I will try.

STUDENT.

I cannot tear myself away,
Let me before you, sir, my album lay;
Some small memorial of your favour, pray?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

With all my heart. [*Writes and returns the book.*

STUDENT (*reads*).

Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum.
[*Closes it reverentially, and retires.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Take for your law the ancient saw, and that cousin of mine, the snake.
And, with that likeness of yours to God, your heart is like to break.

FAUST (*entering*).

And now where shall we go?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You've but to name
What place you choose, — to me 'tis quite the same.

Suppose we see the small folk first,
And then upon the great ones burst.
With what delight, what profit, too,
You'll revel the pleasant circuit through!

FAUST.

But with my long beard can I face
Society? I want the grace,
The easy, smooth, and polished air,
That of a man's expected there.
Nor could I learn it, if I would.
Adapt myself I never could
To what the world demands of all.
And in a crowd I feel so small,
'Tis certain I shall always be
Embarrassed when in company.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

All that will come in time. Be self-possessed!
In that one word is life's whole art expressed.

FAUST.

But how are we to travel? Where
Are horses, servants, carriage, pray?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

This cloak out so we've but to lay,
And 'twill transport us through the air.
In this bold trip no need to cumber
Yourself with luggage and such lumber.
A little gas, which I've at hand,
Will waft us straight o'er sea and land,
And, as we travel lightly, too,
On at a rattling pace we'll spin.

I wish you joy, friend, of the new
Career of life you now begin.

SCENE II. — *Auerbach's Cellar at Leipzig.*

A Drinking Party of Boon Companions.

FROSCH.

Will nobody drink? Is there never a joke
Among you, or bit of fun to poke?
At other times you can blaze away;
But egad! you're all like damp straw to-day.

BRANDER.

Your fault! You do nothing to make us jolly,
No beastliness, no stupid folly.

FROSCH (*flings a glass of wine at his head*).

There's both for you!

BRANDER.

Brute! Beast!

FROSCH.

You sought it,
My lad of wax, and now you've caught it!

SIEBEL.

Any fellow that quarrels, kick him out!
Come, clear your throats, boys, swill and shout.
Hip, hip, huzza!

ALTMAYER.

I'm lost! Oh dear!
Some cotton! This rowdy splits my ear!

SIEBEL.

Until the vaults with the echo reel,
The strength of the bass you never feel.

FROSCH.

Right! Those that don't like it needn't stay!
Ah, tara, lara, da!

ALTMAYER.

Ah, tara, lara, da!

FROSCH.

Our throats are tuned up, so fire away!

(*Sings.*)

The dear old Roman Empire, how
Does it manage to hang together?

BRANDER.

A filthy song! A political song! Fie, fie!
A most offensive song, say I.
Thank God each morning you have not
To care for that same Roman Empire got.
I hold it a thing to be grateful for,
That I'm neither Kaiser nor Chancellor.
Still, we should have a chief, and may, I hope.
We will, we shall, we must elect a Pope!
I need not tell you, for you're all aware,
What qualities weigh heaviest there,
And lift a man into the chair.

FROSCH (*sings*).

Fly away, fly away, Lady Nightingale,
Over the mountain, and over the dale!

Fly to my sweetheart out over the sea,
And greet her a thousand times from me.

SIEBEL.

No greetings, ho, to sweetings! 'Tis exceedingly improper!

FROSCH.

I will greet her, kiss her, treat her! You sha'n't put on me a stopper.

(*Sings.*)

Undo the bolts at dead of night,
And let the lad that loves you in,
But in the gray of the morning light
Bar him without, and yourself within!

SIEBEL.

Sing on! Our ears with her perfections din!
My time will come to laugh, when you look blue.
She led me a fool's dance, and so she will lead you.
I'd give her for a lover a hobgoblin,
To toy with her on crossroads in the dark;
An old buck-goat, back from the Blocksberg hobbling,
Might tickle her up in passing for a lark!
The blood and bone of any stout young blade
Are much too good for such an arrant jade.
No, no, the only greeting I will hear of
Is smashing all the gipsy's windows clear off.

BRANDER (*striking the table*).

Silence! Silence! To me give ear!
You'll admit that I know what's what.
We have some love-sick spoonies here,
And I must treat them to something pat,

And like to enliven their doleful cheer.
Of the very last fashion is my strain.
Full chorus, mind, for the refrain!

(*Sings.*)

Once in a cellar there lived a rat,
His paunch it grew a thumper,
For he lived on nothing but butter and fat,
Not Luther's self was plumper.
The cook laid poison for him one day,
And he fell into a terrible way,
As if love's tortures twinged him!

CHORUS.

As if love's tortures twinged him!

And he ran out, and round about,
And he could not think what ailed him,
And he scratched, and clawed, and nibbled, and gnawed,
But his fury nought availed him;
He felt the pain shoot from head to foot,
'Twas soon all up with him, poor brute,
As if love's tortures twinged him!

CHORUS.

As if love's tortures twinged him!

In pain, in dismay, in broad noonday,
He dashed into the kitchen,
Fell down on the hearth, and there he lay,
Convulsed with a woful twitching;
But the cook she laughed, when his pain she spied,
"Ha! ha! He's at his last gasp!" she cried,
As if love's tortures twinged him!

CHORUS.

As if love's tortures twinged him!

SIEBEL.

How easy it is to tickle flats!
To lay down poison for poor rats
Is wit of such a spicy flavour!

BRANDER.

No doubt they stand high in your favour.

ALTMAYER.

Fatguts is down in his luck, — 'tis that
Makes him soft-hearted and dejected;
Poor devil, he sees in the bloated rat
The image of himself reflected.

Enter FAUST *and* MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Before all things I must bring you to
A circle of jolly dogs, that you
May see how lightly life can sit.
Every day is a feast with such
Hard-drinking fellows as these. With much
Self-satisfaction and little wit,
Day after day, they may all be found,
Spinning along the same narrow round,
Like a young kitten pursuing its tail.
So long as their heads don't ache or ail,
And with mine host they can score their way,
No care or misgiving at all have they.

BRANDER.

Strangers, and just arrived, that's clear,
Their cut and deportment are so queer!
Not been an hour in town, I'll swear.

FROSCH.

For once you're right, old fellow, there.
Leipzig for ever! 'Tis Paris in small!
It gives us a style, sir, a style to us all.

SIEBEL.

For what do you these strangers take?

FROSCH.

Just leave them to me. In a brace of shakes
Out of these fellows I'll worm the truth,
As easy as draw you a young child's tooth.
Noblemen I should say they were,
They've such a haughty dissatisfied air.

BRANDER.

Mountebanks! That's about their level!

ALTMAYER.

Perhaps!

FROSCH.

I'll trot them. Pray you, note!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

These scum would never surmise the devil,
Although he had them by the throat!

FAUST.

Your servant, sirs!

SIEBEL.

The same to you!
[*Aside, looking askance at* MEPHISTOPHELES.
Limps on one foot? So queerly, too!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Beside you have we leave our chairs to set?
Instead of good drink, then, which here we cannot get,
We shall have your good company for cheer.

ALTMAYER.

You're mighty hard to please, it would appear!

FROSCH.

Just fresh from Rippach, ain't you? I daresay,
You supped, now, with Squire Hans, upon the way?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To-day we galloped past his door;
But had much talk with him, the time before,
About his cousins here; and he presents
To each of you through us his special compliments.
[*Bowing toward* FROSCH.

ALTMAYER (*aside*).

That's home! A knowing dog!

SIEBEL.

A biting wit!

FROSCH.

I'll serve him out, you'll see. Just wait a bit!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Did we not hear — I can't be wrong —
Well-practised voices chanting chorus?
No doubt the vaulted ceiling o'er us
Must echo rarely to a song.

FROSCH.

You are a connoisseur of some pretence?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, no! My powers are weak, my love immense.

ALTMAYER.

Tip us a stave!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A score, if you incline.

SIEBEL.

Brand new, then, let it be, some jolly strain!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We have quite recently returned from Spain,
That beauteous land of song and wine.

(*Sings.*)

A king there was, be't noted,
Who had a lusty flea.

FROSCH.

Mark him, a flea! You take the jest?
Now, by my faith, a royal guest!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*sings*).

A king there was, be't noted,
Who had a lusty flea,
And on this flea he doted,
And loved him tenderly.
A message to the tailor goes,
Swift came the man of stitches,
"Ho, measure the youngster here for clothes,
And measure him for breeches!"

BRANDER.

Mind you impress on Snip to take
Especial care about the fit,
And, as he loves his head, to make
The breeches without wrinkles sit.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*resumes his song*).

In silk and satin of the best
Soon was the flea arrayed there,
Ribbons had he upon his breast,
Likewise a star displayed there;
Prime minister anon he grew,
With star of huge dimensions,
And his kindred, male and female too,
Got titles, rank, and pensions.

And lords and ladies, high and fair,
Were grievously tormented;
Sore bitten the queen and her maidens were,
But they did not dare resent it.

They even were afraid to scratch,
  Howe'er our friends might rack them,
But we without a scruple catch,
  And when we catch we crack them.

CHORUS.

But we without a scruple catch,
  And when we catch, we crack them.

FROSCH.

Bravo! First-rate!

SIEBEL.

So perish all
The race of fleas, both great and small.

BRANDER.

Catch me them daintily on the hip
Between the nail and the finger-tip!

ALTMAYER.

Huzza for freedom! Huzza for wine!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To pledge a bumper glass to freedom, I'd be glad,
Were not this wine of yours so execrably bad.

SIEBEL.

Let's hear no more of that, Sir Superfine!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

But that our host were apt to be offended,
I'd give these worthy fellows here
From our own cellar something splendid!

SIEBEL.

I'll make that square, so never fear.

FROSCH.

Make good your words, and you're a trump. The sample
I charge you, though, to make it ample,
For, if I have to judge of tipple, I
Must have a good mouthful to judge it by.

ALTMAYER (*aside*).

Soho! They're from the Rhine, I see.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A gimlet here?

BRANDER.

For what, now, can that be?
You can't have got the hogsheads at the door?

ALTMAYER.

The landlord's tool-chest's yonder on the floor.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*taking the gimlet, to* FROSCH).

Now say for which you have a mind.

FROSCH.

What! Have you them of every kind?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Name each his choice, strong, sparkling, old, or heady

ALTMAYER (*to* FROSCH).

Aha! your lips are watering already.

FROSCH.

Let it be Rhenish, if I may command.
For best of cheer I'll back old Fatherland.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*boring a hole in the edge of the table where* FROSCH *is sitting*).

A little wax to stop the hole! Quick, quick!

ALTMAYER (*to* FROSCH).

Pshaw, this is palpably a juggler's trick!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* BRANDER).

And you?

BRANDER.

Champagne, champagne for me,
Creaming and sparkling cheerily!

[MEPHISTOPHELES *bores; meanwhile one of the party has made stoppers of wax, and stopped the holes.*

BRANDER.

One can't always put foreign gear aside;
For good things we have often far to go.
French men no real German can abide,
He drinks their wines without a scruple, though.

SIEBEL (*as* MEPHISTOPHELES *approaches him*).

The sour, I own, I can't away with.
Pure sweet, I'd like a glass of that.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*bores*).

You shall, sir, have Tokay to play with.

ALTMAYER.

No, no, sir, no! I tell you what:
You're making game, you are, of us.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That were somewhat too venturous
With men of mark like you. You doubt it?
Quick! Tell me without more ado
What wine I am to serve for you?

ALTMAYER.

Any! So that you don't stand haggling long about it!

[*After all the holes have been bored, and stoppers put into them.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with strange gestures*).

Wine-grapes of the vine are born,
Front of he-goat sprouts with horn,
Wine is juice, and vine-stocks wood,
Wooden board yields wine as good!
Here is truth for him that sees
Into nature's mysteries;
Miracles when you receive,
You have only to believe!

Now draw your stoppers, and fall to!

ALL (*as they draw the stoppers, and the wine each has selected runs into his glass*).

Oh, fountain, beautiful to view!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be very careful. Drink your fill,
But see that not a drop you spill!
[*They drink repeatedly.*

ALL (*sing*).

As savagely jolly are we,
As any five hundred porkers!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These sots from all restraint are freed,
And so are blest, and blest indeed.

FAUST.

I'm sick of this, and would be gone.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Only a little moment stay;
You'll see a glorious display
Of what mere beasts they are, anon.

SIEBEL (*drinks carelessly; wine is spilt on the ground and turns into flame*).

Help! Hell's broke loose! We all are shent!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*adjuring the flame*).

Be quiet, kindly element! [*To the topers.*
This time 'twas nothing but a tiny spark
Of purgatorial fire, not worth remark!

SIEBEL.

Just wait, and your cock's comb I'll mar.
You do not know, it strikes me, who we are.

FROSCH.

His tricks a second time just let him try.

ALTMAYER.

Let's send him to the right-about, say I.

SIEBEL.

Confound you, coming to provoke us
With playing off your hocus-pocus!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Silence, old vat!

SIEBEL.

You broomstick, you!
And so you'd fain be saucy, too?

BRANDER.

Wait, and I'll thrash you black and blue.

ALTMAYER (*draws a stopper from the table; fire shoots out toward him*).

I burn! I'm all on fire!

SIEBEL.

The wizard!
Down with him! Stick him through the gizzard!
[*They draw their knives, and make a rush at* MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with solemn gesticulations*).

Voices that delude the ear,
Forms that mock the eye, appear!

Let the distant seem the near,
Be ye there and be ye here!
[*They stand amazed and stare at each other.*

ALTMAYER.

Where am I? What a lovely land!

FROSCH.

Vineyards! How strange!

SIEBEL.

And grapes that court the hand!

BRANDER.

Here, under these green leaves by me,
See, what a stem! What branches, see!
[*Seizes* SIEBEL *by the nose. The rest do the same with each other, and brandish their knives.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*as before*).

Phantoms of delusion, rise,
Lift the bandage from their eyes!
And take note, ye swinish soaks,
In what wise the devil jokes!
[*He disappears with* FAUST. *The topers recoil from one another.*

SIEBEL.

What's this?

ALTMAYER.

How's this?

FROSCH.

Was that your nose?

BRANDER (*to* SIEBEL).

On yours, too, see, my fingers close!

ALTMAYER.

It sent a shock through all my limbs!
A chair! I'm falling! My head swims!

FROSCH.

What ails you all?

SIEBEL.

Where is he? Where?
Let me but catch the knave, he dies, I swear.

ALTMAYER.

Out of the cellar-door, astride
A huge wine-tun, I saw him ride.
I feel like lead about the feet.
[*Turning toward the table.*
Zounds! Should the wine be running yet!

SIEBEL.

'Twas all a sham, a trick, a cheat!

FROSCH.

Yet, that it was wine, I would bet.

BRANDER.

But how about the grapes?

ALTMAYER.

Well, after that,
Doubt miracles who may, I won't, that's flat.

Scene III. — *Witches' Kitchen.*

A large caldron suspended above the fire upon a low hearth. Through the fumes that ascend from it various figures are visible. A female ape sits beside the caldron skimming it, and watching that it does not boil over. The male ape with the young ones sits near her, and warms himself. Walls and ceiling are decorated with witches' furniture of the most fantastic kind.

Faust, Mephistopheles.

FAUST.

I loathe this wizard rubbish. You maintain
That in this chaos of a crazy brain
I shall my wasted strength repair?
Take counsel of an aged hag? Oh, shame!
Can the foul mess that simmers there
Strike thirty winters from my frame?
If you know nothing better, I despair!
Already do I feel, to hope were vain.
Hath nature, hath some soul of noble strain,
Discovered no elixir anywhere?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now with your old sagacity you speak!
There is a natural recipe for youth; but you
For that must in another volume seek,
And there it makes a striking chapter, too!

FAUST.

What is its nature? Tell me, what?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Look you! A remedy, to be got
Sans sorcery, gold, or medicine.
Hence to the fields at once! Begin
To hack and delve with might and main,
Yourself and your desires confine
Within the very narrowest line;
On simple food yourself sustain,
With beasts live as a beast, and think it not a bore
Yourself to dung the field you are to reap.
This, trust me, is the best of ways to keep
The fire of youth within you to fourscore.

FAUST.

I am not used to toil, and 'tis too late to force
Myself to wield the spade. A life so bare,
So cramped, would drive me to despair.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Then is the witch our sole resource.

FAUST.

But why this beldam? Cannot you
Without her aid the potion brew?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That were fine waste of time. Go to!
Rather would I a thousand bridges build,
Within the time 'twould take to brew it.
No matter how you may be skilled,

You must give tireless patience to it.
A quiet spirit works at it for years;
Time, only time, the fermentation clears,
And concentrates its subtle force.
All the ingredients of the stew
Are wondrous in their kind and source.
The devil taught the witch, 'tis true,
But, make it, that he cannot do.

[*Turning to the Apes.*

A handsome brood as ever was!
This is the lad, and this the lass. [*To the Apes.*
The dame is not at home, it seems?

THE APES.

She takes her 'rouse
Outside the house,
Up by the chimney among the beams.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And how long is she apt to stay,
When she is out for such a cause?

APES.

We just have time to warm our paws,
And nothing more, while she's away.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

How like you them, the dainty brutes?

FAUST.

Such loathsome creatures have I never seen.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Nay, nay! A chat like this, I ween,
Is just the thing that best my fancy suits!
[*To the Apes.*
Tell me, ye whelps accurst, what you
Are stirring there at such a rate?

APES.

Coarse beggar's broth we boil and stew.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Your custom for it will be great.

THE HE-APE (*approaching and fawning upon* MEPHISTOPHELES).

Tarry not, but in a trice
Shake the box, and fling the dice!
I am poor, so let me win;
Poverty is such a sin;
But, if money once I had,
Who would say that I was mad?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How happy, now, it would the monkey make,
If in the lottery he might only stake!
[*The young Apes, who have meanwhile been playing with a large globe, roll it forwards.*

THE HE-APE.

This is the world,
Evermore twirled
Round about, round about,
Destined to bound about!

Mounting and sinking,
Like crystal clinking;
Smashing like winking
Certain to follow!
All within hollow.
Here 'tis all o'er bright,
Here even more bright!
So jolly am I!
Out of the way,
Old boy! Touch it not!
You're booked, you must die!
'Tis nothing but clay,
And that goes to pot!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

For what is the sieve here?

HE-APE (*takes it down*).

Came you to thieve here,
Straight 'twould show me why you came.
[*Runs to the She-Ape, and makes her look through it.*
Through the sieve look, look! Dost thou
Recognise the thief, and now
Art afraid to name his name?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*approaches the fire*).

And this pot?

THE APES (*male and female*).

The crack-brained sot,
He knows not the pot,
He knows not the kettle!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Unmannerly brute!

THE HE-APE.

Look ye now, put
This whisk in your hand, and sit down on the settle.
[*Forces* MEPHISTOPHELES *to sit down.*

FAUST (*who has, meanwhile, been standing before a mirror, now advancing toward, and now retiring from, it*).

What form divine is this, that seems to live
Within the magic glass before mine eyes!
Oh, love, to me thy swiftest pinion give,
And waft me to the region where she lies!
Oh, if I stir beyond this spot, and dare
Advance to scan it with a nearer gaze,
The vision fades and dies as in a haze.
A woman's form beyond expression fair!
Can woman be so fair? Or must I deem
In this recumbent form I see revealed
The quintessence of all that heaven can yield?
On earth can aught be found of beauty so supreme?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why, when a God works hard for six whole days,
And when his task is over, says, "Bravo!"
That he should turn out something to amaze,
Is nothing more than natural, you know.
Gaze on your fill! As choice a treasure
My power for you can soon provide;
And happy he beyond all measure,
Who has the luck to bear home such a bride!
[FAUST *continues to gaze into the mirror.* MEPHISTOPHELES, *lounging on the settle, and playing with the whisk, continues.*

Here like a king upon my throne I sit,
My sceptre here! My crown, though, where is it?

THE APES (*who up to this time have been indulging in all sorts of fantastic gambols, bring* MEPHISTOPHELES *a crown with loud acclamations*).

O, deign, with a flood
Of sweat and of blood,
The crown to belime!
[*They handle the crown awkwardly, and break it into two pieces, with which they dance round and round.*
'Tis done! He! He!
We speak and we see,
We hear and we rhyme.

FAUST (*before the mirror*).

Woe's me! As though I should go mad, I feel!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*pointing to the Apes*).

Why, even my head, too, begins to reel.

THE APES.

And if we make a lucky hit,
And if the words fall in and fit,
Thought's begot, and with the jingle
Seems to interweave and mingle.

FAUST (*as before*).

My breast is all on fire! Let us away!
Even now 'tis for my peace too late.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*still in the same position*).

Well, every one must own that they
Are candid poets, at any rate.

[*The caldron, which the She-Ape has neglected in the interim, begins to boil over; a great flame shoots out and rushes up the chimney. The* WITCH *comes shooting down the chimney with a horrible shriek.*

THE WITCH.

Au! Au! Au! Au!
Confounded beast! Accursèd sow!
Neglecting the caldron and singeing your dame, you
Beast accursèd, I'll brain you, I'll lame you!
[*Espying* FAUST *and* MEPHISTOPHELES.
What do I see here?
Who may you be here?
What do you seek here?
How did you sneak here?
May fire-pangs fierce
Your marrow pierce!

[*She dips the skimming ladle into the caldron, and sprinkles flames on* FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, *and the Apes. The Apes whimper.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*inverting the whisk, which he holds in his hand, and laying about with it among the glasses and pots*).

To smash! To smash,
With all your trash!
There goes your stew,
There goes your glass!
You see, we too
Our jest can pass!
You carrion, we
Can match your feat!

Good time, you see,
To your tune we beat!

[*As the* WITCH *recoils full of rage and amazement.*

Dost thou recognise me now?
Scarecrow! Atomy! Dost thou
Recognise thy lord and master?
What holds my hand, that I should not blast her?
Her and her monkey-sprites together?
Is all respect within thee dead
For me and for my doublet red?
Dost recognise not the cock's feather?
Have I so masked my face? My name
Must I on the house-tops proclaim?

THE WITCH.

Master, forgive my rough salute!
But yet I see no cloven foot:
And where may your two ravens be?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

For this time that apology
May pass; for 'tis, I can't forget,
A long while now since last we met.
Besides, the march of intellect,
Which into shape, as time runs on,
Is licking all the world, upon
The devil's self has had effect.
The northern goblin no more shocks the sense;
Horns, tails, and claws are things you never see:
As for the foot, with which I can't dispense,
That with society might injure me;
And therefore I for many years
Have, like young buckish cavaliers,
Among the upper circles gadded,
With calves most curiously padded.

THE WITCH (*dancing*).

I feel as if I were mad with sheer
Delight to see once more Dan Satan here!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Woman, that name offends my ear!

THE WITCH.

Wherefore? What wrong has it done you?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Tut!
It has been written down, for many a day,
With other things that men call fables; but
No whit the better off for that are they.
The Wicked One they certainly ignore,
But Wicked Ones are numerous as before.
If name I must have, call me Baron! That
Will do, although the title's somewhat flat.
A squire of quite as high degree
Am I, as any squire can be.
My gentle blood you doubt not; there
Is the escutcheon that I bear.
[*Makes an obscene gesture.*

THE WITCH (*laughs immodcrately*).

Ha! ha! That's just like you! So clever!
Always the same mad wag as ever.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Mark this, my friend! Whate'er the hitch is,
This is the way to deal with witches.

THE WITCH.

Now, gentlemen, what is't you seek?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A bumper of your famous brew.
Your oldest, though, I must bespeak;
Years doubly efficacious make it.

THE WITCH.

Right gladly! Here's a flask! I take it
Myself at times in little sips;
All trace of stink has left it, too.
I'll give it cheerfully to you.
[*Aside to* MEPHISTOPHELES.
But him there, if it touch his lips,
Unless he's seasoned 'gainst its power,
You know, he cannot live an hour.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, he is an especial friend,
'Tis just the thing to serve his end.
The best your kitchen can produce
I do not grudge him for his use.
So draw your circle, and unroll
Your spells, and hand him out a brimming bowl!
[*The* WITCH, *with weird gestures, draws a circle, and places marvellous things within it; meanwhile the glasses begin to ring, the caldron to sound and make music. Last of all she fetches a great book, places the Apes within the circle, where she makes them serve as a reading-desk, and hold the torches. She beckons* FAUST *to approach.*

FAUST (*to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

What is all this to end in, say?
These mad paraphernalia,
These gestures and distortions frantic,
This mess of juggle and of antic,
I know them all too well of old,
And in profound aversion hold.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

All humbug! stuff to laugh at merely!
But do not take things too severely!
Being a doctor in her way,
She must some hocus-pocus play,
In order that on you her juice
May the desired effect produce.

[*He forces* FAUST *to enter the circle.*

THE WITCH (*with great emphasis declaims from her book*).

This must ye ken!
From one make ten,
Drop two, and then
Make three square, which
Will make you rich;
Skip o'er the four!
From five and six, —
In that the trick's, —
Make seven and eight,
And all is straight;
And nine is one,
And ten is none.
This is the witch's One Time's One!

FAUST.

The beldam's babble seems as it
Were ravings of a fever fit.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, there's a deal more yet to follow,
And just as solid, and as hollow;
The whole book clinks the self-same chime.
I know it well; and much good time
Have I lost o'er it, good and serious.
For downright contradiction pulls
As hard on wise men's brains, as fools'!
And unto both remains alike mysterious.
The trick's both old and new. The way
At all times was, as 'tis to-day,
By three and one, and one and three,
To preach up lies as simple sooth,
And sow broadcast by land and sea
Delusions in the place of truth.
So men talk on the nonsense they
Have ground into them in the schools;
And no one cares to say them nay,
For who'd perplex himself with fools?
Men, for the most part, when they hear
Words smite with vigour on their ear,
Believe that thought an entrance finds
Into the things they call their minds.

THE WITCH (*continues*).

Science is light!
But from the sight
Of all the world 'tis hidden.
Who seeks it not,
To him 'tis brought,
Unnoticed and unbidden.

FAUST.

What is this nonsense she is spouting?
My head will split anon. I seem to hear

A hundred thousand maniacs shouting
Their lunacies' full chorus in mine ear.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Enough! Enough! most admirable Sybil!
Dispense thy drink, and, mind, no paltry dribble!
Fill up the cup, ay, fill it to the brim!
My friend is safe, 'twill do no harm to him.
He's taken honours 'mongst us, ay, and quaffed
Full many a deep and most potential draught.

THE WITCH (*with many ceremonies pours the drink into a goblet. As* FAUST *raises it to his lips, a film of flame shoots out from it*).

Off with it! Leave no drop above!
'Twill warm the cockles of your heart!
What! with the devil hand and glove,
And yet at flame recoil and start?
[*The* WITCH *dissolves the circle.* FAUST *steps out.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now, forth at once! To rest would mar all quite!

THE WITCH.

Your little drop will do you good, I trust.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to the* WITCH).

And, if in aught I can oblige you, just
Remind me of it on Walpurgis Night.

THE WITCH.

Here is a song! If you at times
Will sing it, you will find the rhymes

"My pretty lady, permit me, do,
My escort and arm to offer you!"

Photogravure after the painting by A. Liezen Meyer

Produce upon you an effect
More singular than you expect.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Come! Come! Be guided for your good!
'Tis indispensable you should
Perspire, that so its influence may
Through all your vitals find its way.
Hereafter I will teach you how to prize
That prime distinction of noblesse,
Sheer lounging, listless idleness;
And soon you'll feel, with sweet surprise,
How Cupid gambols in the breast,
And flits and flutters there with exquisite unrest.

FAUST.

One glance into the mirror there!
That woman's form was all too fair!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Nay, nay! Thou shalt ere long behold
The paragon of womankind,
In feature perfect, and in mould
Warm, living, ay, and loving to your mind. [*Aside.*
With this draught in his body, he
In every wench a Helena will see.

SCENE IV. — *Street.*

FAUST, MARGARET (*passing along*).

FAUST.

My pretty lady, permit me, do,
My escort and arm to offer you!

MARGARET.

I'm neither a lady, nor pretty, and so
Can home without an escort go.
[*Breaks away from him and exit.*

FAUST.

By heaven, this girl is lovely! Ne'er
Have I seen anything so fair.
She is so pure, so void of guile,
Yet something snappish, too, the while.
Her lips' rich red, her cheeks' soft bloom,
Will haunt me to the day of doom!
The pretty way she droops her eyes
Has thrilled my heart in wondrous wise;
Her short sharp manner, half in fright,
'Twas charming, fascinating quite!
(*To* MEPHISTOPHELES, *who enters.*)
Hark, you must get that girl for me!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Get you that girl? Which do you mean?

FAUST.

She that went by but now.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What! She?
She has to her confessor been,
Who gave her — he could scarce do less —
Full absolution; I was there,
Lying ensconced behind his chair.
Though she had nothing to confess,
Nothing whatever, to him she went,
Poor thing, she is so innocent.
Over that girl I have no power.

FAUST.

Yet is she fourteen, every hour.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Spoken like Sir Rake, who would make prize
Of every dainty flower he spies,
And thinks all honours, favours, may
Be had for taking any day!
But this won't do in every case.

FAUST.

Ho, Master Graveairs, is it so?
Your sermonising's out of place.
And, in a word, I'd have you know,
Unless this very night shall see
This sweet young thing in my embrace,
All's at an end 'twixt you and me!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Think of the obstacles! I should
Require at least a fortnight good,
To bring about a meeting merely.

FAUST.

In half the time I'll undertake,
Without the devil's aid, to make
A chit like that adore me dearly.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why, by your talk, now, one might swear,
That you almost a Frenchman were!
But, pray, don't lose your temper so!
For where's the good, I'd like to know
Of rushing to enjoyment straight?

The pleasure's not by much so great,
As when you've first by every kind
Of foolish fondling to your mind
The doll contrived to knead and mould,
As many Italian tales have told.

FAUST.

My appetite, I tell you, wants
No such fantastic stimulants.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That may be; — but, apart all jest,
Or slight upon you, I protest,
With this young thing you'll ne'er succeed,
By pushing on at race-horse speed.
We cannot storm the town, in short,
So must to stratagem resort.

FAUST.

Fetch me some thing she's used to wear!
Her bedroom, introduce me there!
A kerchief from her bosom bring,
The darling's garter, anything!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That you may see I mean to spare
No pains to bring your suit to bear,
We shall not lose one moment, — nay,
We'll bring you to her room this very day.

FAUST.

And shall I see, — possess her?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No!
She will be with a neighbour. So
You may, quite undisturbed the while,
Within her atmosphere beguile
The time by dreaming, fancy free,
Of pleasures afterward to be.

FAUST.

Can we go there at once?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, no.
'Tis much too early yet to go.

FAUST.

Provide me with some present straight,
Which may her fancy captivate! [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Presents? Oh, rare! He's sure to make a hit.
Full many a famous place I know,
And treasures buried long ago.
Well! I must look them up a bit.

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Evening.*

A tidily appointed little room.

MARGARET (*braiding and binding up her hair*).

Who was that gentleman? Heigho!
I would give something, now, to know.

He looked so frank and handsome, he
Of noble blood must surely be.
That much, at least, his forehead told;
He ne'er had ventured else to be so bold. [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES *and* FAUST *enter.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come in as softly as you may!

FAUST (*after a pause*).

Leave me alone — alone, I pray!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*peering about the room*).

It is not every girl keeps things so neat. [*Exit.*

FAUST (*casting his eyes around*).

Welcome, thou twilight glimmer sweet,
Throughout this sanctuary shed!
Oh, love's delicious pain, that art
By dews of hope sustained and fed,
Take absolute possession of my heart!
How, all around, there breathes a sense
Of calm, of order, and content!
What plenty in this indigence!
In this low cell what ravishment!
[*Casts himself down upon a leathern armchair by the bedside.*
Receive me, thou, that hast with open arm
Held generations past in joy and moan!
Ah me! how often has a rosy swarm
Of children clung to this paternal throne!
Here did my love, perhaps, with grateful breast
For gifts the holy Christ-child brought her, stand,

Her chubby childish cheeks devoutly pressed
Against her aged grandsire's withered hand.
I feel thy spirit, maiden sweet,
Of order and contentment round me play,
That like a mother schools thee day by day,
Upon the table bids thee lay
The cover folded fresh and neat,
And strew the sand that crackles 'neath the feet.
Dear hand, that dost all things with beauty leaven,
Thou makest, like a god, this lowly home a heaven.
And here! [*Raises one of the curtains of the bed.*
What rapturous tremor shakes me now?
Here could I linger hours untold.
Here the incarnate angel thou,
O Nature, didst in airy visions mould;
Here lay the child, its gentle breast
Filled with warm life; and, hour by hour,
The bud, by hands divine caressed,
Expanded to the perfect flower!

And thou! What brings thee hither? I
Am stirred with strange emotion. Why?
What wouldst thou here? What weight so sore
Is this that presses on thy heart?
O hapless Faust, so changed thou art,
I know thee now no more, no more!

Is't some enchanted atmosphere
Encompasses, and charms me here?
Upon possession's bliss supreme
My soul till now was madly bent,
And now in a delicious dream
Of love I melt away content.
Is man, with all his powers so rare,
The sport of every gust of air?

And if she were to enter now,
How would your guilty soul her glances meet?
The mighty braggart, ah, how small! would bow,
Dissolved in abject terror, at her feet.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Despatch! She's coming to the door.

FAUST.

Hence! Hence! Here I return no more.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Here is a casket, laden well;
I got it, where? no need to tell.
If you will only place it there
Within the press — quick, quick! — I swear
She'll be beside herself with joy.
Some baubles there I've stowed away;
For toys we angle with a toy.
Pah! Child is child, and play is play.

FAUST.

I know not — shall I?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Can you ask it?
Perhaps you'd like to keep the casket!
In that case, friend, I would advise
Your lechery to economise
The precious hours, — give up the bubble,
And save myself all farther trouble.
You avaricious? You? Oh, no!

I won't believe that this is so.
I scratch my head — toil might and main —
[*He places the casket in the press and closes the lock.*
Let us be off! Psha! lingering still? —
The sweet young thing for to gain,
And bend her to your wish and will;
And here are you with face of gloom,
For all the world as if you were
Just entering your lecture-room,
And saw before you Physics there,
And Metaphysics grimly stare!
Come! Start! [*Exeunt.*

MARGARET (*enters with a lamp*).

It is so close, so sultry here! [*Opens the window.*
And yet outside 'twas rather chilly.
I feel, I can't tell how; oh, dear!
I wish that mother would come in.
I have a creeping all over my skin.
I'm such a frightened thing, — so silly!
[*Begins to sing as she undresses herself.*

In Thule dwelt a King, and he
Was leal unto the grave;
A cup to him of the red red gold
His leman dying gave.

He quaffed it to the dregs, whene'er
He drank among his peers,
And ever, as he drained it down,
His eyes would brim with tears.

And when his end drew near, he told
His kingdom's cities up,

Gave all his wealth unto his heir,
But with it not the cup.

He sat and feasted at the board,
His knights around his knee,
Within the palace of his sires,
Hard by the roaring sea.

Then up he rose, that toper old,
A long last breath he drew,
And down the cup he loved so well
Into the ocean threw.

He saw it flash, then settle down,
Down, down into the sea,
And, as he gazed, his eyes grew dim,
Nor ever again drank he.

[*She opens the press to put away her clothes, and discovers the casket.*

What's here? How comes this lovely casket thus?
I'm very confident I locked the press.
'Tis surely most mysterious!
What it contains I cannot guess.
In pledge for money lent, maybe,
'Tis with my mother left to keep?
A ribbon and a little key!
I've half a mind to take a peep.
What's this? Great heavens! All my days
The like of this I've never seen, —
Jewels and trinkets! Such a blaze
Might grace a duchess, ay, a queen!
On me how would the necklace sit?
Whose can they be, these braveries fine?

[*Puts on the trinkets and walks before the looking-glass.*

Oh, if the ear-rings were but mine!
In them one doesn't look the same a bit.
You may be young, you may be pretty;
All very nice and fine to view,
But nobody cares a straw for you,
And, if folks praise, 'tis half in pity.
For gold all strive,
For gold all wive.
'Tis gold rules all things 'neath the sun.
Alas! we poor folks that have none!

Scene II. — *Public Promenade.*

Faust *walking up and down wrapt in thought.*
To him Mephistopheles.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

By love despised and its tortures fell!
By all the elements of hell!
Oh, would I only knew something worse,
That I might cram it into a curse!

FAUST.

What's wrong? What puts you in such case?
In all my life I ne'er saw such a face.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The devil's self if I were not,
I'd pitch myself to him on the spot!

FAUST.

What has befallen to rob you of your wits!
How well on you this maniac fury sits!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Just think — 'tis not to be endured —
The set of jewels I procured
For Margaret, a rascal priest
Has swept clean off, — he has, the beast!
Her mother of them got an inkling,
And fell to quaking in a twinkling.
The nose that woman has, you'd ne'er
Believe, for scenting all that's wrong.
Over her Book of Common Prayer
She snuffles, snuffles, all day long.
With sanctimonious scowl demure,
At every stick of furniture
She drops her nose to ascertain
If it be holy or profane.
So in the trinkets soon she spies
That not much of a blessing lies.
Quoth she, "All such unrighteous gear
Corrupts both body and soul, my dear.
So let us, then, this devil's bait
To Mary Mother consecrate,
And she, as recompense instead,
Will gladden us with heavenly bread."
Poor Gretchen pulled a long wry face.
"Gift horse!" thought she, "in any case!
And very godless he cannot be
Who brought it here so handsomely."
The mother for the parson sent,
Who heard her nonsense, and his eyes,
Be sure, they gleamed with a rare content,
When he beheld the glistening prize.
Quoth he, "A holy frame of mind!
Who conquers self leaves all behind!
The Church, for whom your gift is meant,
A stomach has most excellent.
Whole countries, land, and grange, and town,

She at a meal has swallowed down,
Yet ne'er, however gorged with pelf,
Was known to overeat herself.
The Church, my dears, alone with zest
Can such unrighteous gear digest."

FAUST.

That power it shares with not a few;
Your king, now, has it, eke your Jew.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

So saying, he swept off amain
Ring, necklace, bracelet, brooch, and chain,
With quite as unconcerned an air
As if they merely mushrooms were,
Treating my precious gems and casket
Like nuts so many in a basket;
And, promising that heaven no end
Of fair rewards to them would send,
He took his leave, and there they sat,
Immensely edified by that.

FAUST.

And Gretchen?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

She is all unrest,
And scarce knows what she'd like the best,
Thinks of the trinkets night and day,
And more of them that brought them — hey!

FAUST.

It pains me that my love should fret.
Fetch her at once another set!
The first were no great things. —

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Heyday!
All things are to my lord child's play.

FAUST.

Do what I wish, and quickly! Go!
Stick to her neighbour close. Be no
Mere milk-and-water devil, and get
Of these gewgaws another set.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That you desire it is enough. [*Exit* FAUST.
Such lovesick fools away will puff
Sun, moon, and stars into the air,
And all to please their lady fair.

SCENE III. — *The Neighbour's House.*

MARTHA (*alone*).

My good man, God forgive me, he
Has acted scurvily by me,
To start away, the Lord knows where,
And leave me widowed, lone, and bare.
I never plagued him — God forbid! —
I loved him dearly, that I did. [*Weeps.*
Perhaps he's dead, though? Cruel fate!
Had I but some certificate,
The fact officially to state!

Enter MARGARET.

MARGARET.

Martha!

MARTHA.

What ails my pretty dear?

MARGARET.

I feel just like to drop. See here!
Another casket — nothing less —
Of ebony left in my press!
And things, so grand and fine, I feel
They're costlier than the first a deal.

MARTHA.

You must not let your mother know,
Or to the priest they, too, will go.

MARGARET.

Oh, see, now, see! Look at them, do!

MARTHA.

You lucky, lucky creature you!

MARGARET.

Alas! I never dare appear,
In the street or at church, in such fine gear.

MARTHA.

To me come often over, lass;
You can put them on, and nobody know;
Parade a good hour before the glass,
We'll have our own enjoyment so.
And then, if you'll but wait, no doubt
You're sure somehow to get a chance
Little by little to bring them out,
On holidays, or at a dance.

We'll manage it so as to make no stir;
A necklace first, and then the pearl
Ear-rings — your mother won't notice, girl;
We can always make out some story for her.

MARGARET.

But who could both the caskets bring?
There's something wrong about the thing.
[*A knock at the door.*
Good heavens! Should that be mother!

MARTHA.

Nay,
Some stranger 'tis — Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*entering*).

I pray
Your pardon, ladies, for intruding thus,
'Tis most unceremonious.
[*Steps back respectfully on seeing* MARGARET.
Which may Dame Martha Schwerdtlein be?

MARTHA.

What is your pleasure? I am she.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside to her*).

Now that I know you, that will do.
You've quality, I see, with you.
Excuse the liberty I took:
In later in the day I'll look.

MARTHA (*aloud*).

Just think, the odd mistake he made! He
Fancied, child, you were a lady.

MARGARET.

A simple girl am I, and poor.
The gentleman's too kind, I'm sure.
These ornaments are not my own.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis not the ornaments alone;
The piercing glance, the air urbane —
How glad I am I may remain!

MARTHA.

Your news, sir? I'm all ears! How went it?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I would my tale were less distressing.
On me, I trust, you won't resent it?
Your husband's dead, and sends his blessing.

MARTHA.

Is dead? Poor darling! lackaday!
My husband's dead. I faint away!

MARGARET.

Oh, keep your heart up, dearest friend!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Hear the sad story to the end!

MARGARET.

'Tis things like this which make me pray
That fall in love I never may;
For such a loss, I do believe,
To death itself would make me grieve.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ah, joy goes hand in hand with care.

MARTHA.

But tell me how he died and where?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In Padua his bones repose.
There, ma'am, in Saint Antonio's, —
The best of consecrated ground, —
A quiet corner he has found.

MARTHA.

But have you nought for me beside?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes, one most weighty, huge request, —
Three hundred masses to provide,
To sing his poor soul into rest.
Of all but this my pocket's bare.

MARTHA.

What! Not a luck-penny? What! Ne'er
A trinket, — token? Why, there's not
A handicraftsman but has got,
Somewhere within his wallet stored,
However bare, some little hoard,
Something to touch a body's heart with,
He'd sooner starve, or beg, than part with.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I feel for you, but let me say
His money was not fooled away.

Besides, he did his sins deplore,
But mourned his evil luck considerably more.

MARGARET.

Alas! that men should be so wretched! He
Shall for his soul's repose have many a prayer from me.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You are so good, so charming, you
Deserve a husband, ay, and quickly too.

MARGARET.

Ah, no! Too soon for that! I can't —

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, till the husband comes, then, a gallant!
Heaven has no boon more sweet, more rare,
Than in one's arms to fold a thing so fair.

MARGARET.

That's not our country's usage, sir.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Usage or not, such things occur.

MARTHA.

Go on, sir

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I was at his side,
There by the bed on which he died,
A sorrier eyes never saw,
A mere dung-heap of rotten straw.
Yet still he made a Christian ending,
And found that, what with drink and spending,

He had run up a great deal more
Than he had thought for, on his score.
"How I detest myself!" cried he,
"For having so disgracefully
Deserted both my wife and calling.
The very thought on't is appalling!
It saps my life. Could I but know
That she forgives me, ere I die!"

MARTHA (*weeping*).

Dear heart! I — I forgave him long ago.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

"Still, God knows, she was more to blame than I."

MARTHA.

He lied there! What! To lie, the knave,
Upon the threshold of the grave!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

His latest gasps were spent in fiction,
That is my most profound conviction.
"Small time for idling had I," he said,
"First getting children, then getting them bread,
And clothing their backs, yet never had yet
A moment's quiet to eat my crust."

MARTHA.

Did he thus all my truth, my love, forget,
My drudging early and late?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be just!
Not so. Of that in his dejection

He showed a touching recollection.
" When I," he said, " was leaving Malta, I
Prayed for my wife and children most devoutly.
Heaven so far blessed my prayers that by-and-by
We met a Turkish galley, took it stoutly.
It carried treasure for the Sultan. There
Valour for once had its reward, 'tis true,
And I received — and 'twas my simple due —
Of what we took a very handsome share."

MARTHA.

What? How? He hid it somewhere, I suppose?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Where the four winds have blown it now, who knows?
Strolling forlorn in Naples through the city,
A damsel on his loneliness took pity,
And such warm tenderness between them passed,
He bore its marks, poor saint, about him to the last.

MARTHA.

Wretch! To his children play the thief?
Not all his want, not all his grief,
Could check his shameless life.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ay, ma'am, but surely
'Twas this that killed him prematurely.
Now, were I in your place, I would
Mourn one chaste year of widowhood;
And look about meanwhile to find
A second husband to my mind.

MARTHA.

Ah me! With all his faults I durst
Not hope to find one like the first.
A kinder-hearted fool than he
'Twas scarcely possible to be.
His only fault was, that from home
He was too much inclined to roam,
Loved foreign women — filthy vice! —
And foreign wine, and those curst dice.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How different might have been his state,
Had he, poor wretch, been equally
Forbearing and affectionate!
Treat me as well, and, I protest,
I'd ask you to change rings with me.

MARTHA.

O Lord, sir, you are pleased to jest!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

I'd best be off now! This absurd
Old fool would take the devil at his word.
[*To* MARGARET.
How is it with your heart? — Content?

MARGARET.

What mean you, sir?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Sweet innocent!
(*Aloud*) Ladies, farewell!

MARGARET.

Farewell!

MARTHA.

Before
You go, sir, give me one word more.
I'd like to have some proof to show
Where, how, and when my darling died,
And was interred. I've always tried
To be methodical, and so
'Twould comfort me, it would indeed,
Could I his death but in the papers read.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, certainly, good madam, I
Your wish at once can gratify.
One witness by another backed,
All the world over, proves a fact.
I have a friend in town here, who will state
What you require before the magistrate.
I'll bring him here with me.

MARTHA.

Oh, do, sir, pray!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And this young lady will be with you, eh?
A fine young fellow! A great traveller! Quite
A ladies' man, — especially polite.

MARGARET.

I'd sink with shame before him, sir.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No! Not before an emperor.

MARTHA.

At dusk in my back garden we
You and your friend will hope to see.

Scene IV. — *Street.*

Faust, Mephistopheles.

FAUST.

What speed? Will't work? What of my dear?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Bravo! So hot? You'll shortly bring
Your quarry down. This evening
At neighbour Martha's shall you see her!
That is a woman made express
To play the pimp and procuress.

FAUST.

Good! Good!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

But there is something, too,
That she requires of us to do.

FAUST.

Well, one good turn deserves another.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We
Have to depone — a mere formality —
That stiff and stark her husband's carcass lies
In Padua in holy ground.

FAUST.

Most wise!
Why, we must make the journey first, of course?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Sancta simplicitas! No need of that! You just
Speak to the facts, and take them upon trust.

FAUST.

The game is up, if that's the sole resource.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

O holy man! is this your cue?
Is this the first time in your life that you
Have borne false witness? Have you not
In language the most positive defined
God, the world, all that moves therein, mankind,
His capabilities of feeling, thought,
Ay, done it with a breast undashed
By faintest fear, a forehead unabashed?
Yet tax yourself, and you must own that you
As much in truth about these matters knew
As of Herr Schwerdtlein's death you do.

FAUST.

Liar and sophist, thou wilt be
Liar and sophist to the close!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, certainly, could one not see
A little farther before one's nose.
To-morrow will not you — of course,
In all integrity! — beguile
Poor Margaret, and your suit enforce,
By swearing all your soul hangs on her smile?

FAUST.

And from my heart I'd speak.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

O specious art!
You'll talk about eternal truth and love,
Of passion, all control, all change, above;
Will this, too, come quite purely from the heart?

FAUST.

Peace, fiend! it will! What! If I feel,
And for that feeling, frenzy, flame,
I seek, but cannot find a name,
Then through the round of nature reel,
With every sense at fever heat,
Snatching at all sublimest phrases,
And call this fire, that in me blazes,
Endless, eternal, ay, eternal, —
Is this mere devilish deceit,
Devised to dazzle, and to cheat?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yet am I right.

FAUST.

Thou fiend infernal!
Hear me! And mark, too, what I say,

So spare these lungs of mine, I pray.
He that's resolved he's in the right,
And has but tongue enough, is quite
Secure to gain his point. But come,
This babblement grows wearisome.
Right, then, thou art. I grant it, just
Because I cannot choose but must.

Scene V. — *Garden.*

Margaret *on* Faust's *arm.* Martha *with* Mephistopheles *walking up and down.*

MARGARET.

You only bear with me, I'm sure you do,
You stoop, to shame me, you so wise.
You travellers are so used to view
All things you come across with kindly eyes.
I know my poor talk can but weary such
A man as you, that must have known so much.

FAUST.

One glance, one word of thine, to me is more
Than all this world's best wisdom — all its lore.
[*Kisses her hand.*

MARGARET.

Oh, no, sir, no! How can you kiss it? 'Tis
So coarse, so hard — it is not fit —
The things I've had to do with it!
Mother's too niggardly — indeed she is.
[*They pass on.*

MARTHA.

And you, like this, are always travelling, sir?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Business, alas! and duty force us. Ah! what pain
It costs a man from many a place to stir,
Where yet his fate forbids him to remain!

MARTHA.

'Tis very well to rove this way
About the world when young, and strong, and brave.
But soon or later comes the evil day;
And to go crawling on into the grave
A stiff old lonely bachelor, — that can
Never be good for any man.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I shudder, thinking such may be my fate.

MARTHA.

Then, sir, be wise, before it is too late. [*They pass on.*

MARGARET.

Yes! Out of sight is out of mind!
Politeness costs you nothing. Why,
You've friends in plenty, good and kind,
And they have far more sense than I.

FAUST.

Oh, best of creatures, trust me, the pretence
Of that which passes with the world for sense
More frequently is neither more nor less
Than self-conceit and narrow-mindedness.

MARGARET.

How so?

FAUST.

Ah! That simplicity
And innocence will never recognise
Themselves, and all their worth so holy!
That meekness and a spirit lowly,
The highest gifts, that Nature's free
And loving bounty can devise —

MARGARET.

A little moment only think of me;
I shall have time enough to think of you.

FAUST.

You're much alone, then?

MARGARET.

Yes! 'Tis true,
Our household's small, but still, you see,
It wants no little looking to.
We have no maid; so I've to do
The cooking, sewing, knitting, sweeping;
I'm on my feet from morn till night,
And mother's so exacting, and so tight
In her housekeeping.
Not that she needs to pinch so close. We might
Much more at ease than other people be.
My father left us, when he died,
A cottage with some garden ground, outside
The town, a tidy bit of property.
But now I am not near so sore bestead.
My brother is away — a soldier he.
My little sister's dead.
Ah! with the child I had a world of trouble.
And yet, and yet, I'd gladly undergo

It all again, though it were double,
I loved the darling so.

FAUST.

An angel, sweet, if it resembled you!

MARGARET.

I brought it up, and, do you know,
It loved me with a love so true!
My father died before 'twas born,
We gave up mother for lost; her fit
Left her so wasted, and so forlorn,
And very, very slow she mended, bit by bit.
She could not, therefore, dream herself
Of suckling the poor little elf;
And so I nursed it all alone,
On milk and water, till at last
It grew my very own.
Upon my arm, within my breast,
It smiled, and crowed, and grew so fast.

FAUST.

You must have felt most purely blest.

MARGARET.

Oh, yes! Still I had many things to try me.
The baby's cradle stood at night
Beside my bed: if it but stirred, I would
Awake in fright.
One time I had to give it drink or food,
Another time to lay it by me;
Then, if it had a crying fit,
Out of my bed I needs must get,
And up and down the room go dandling it;
And yet

Be standing at the wash-tub by daybreak,
Then do the marketing, set the house to rights:
And so it went on, mornings, middays, nights,
Always the same! Such things will make
One's spirits not at all times of the best,
Still they give relish to our food, our rest.

[*They pass on.*

MARTHA.

Poor women get the worst on't, though. A dry
Old bachelor's not easy to convert.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Would one like you but make the trial, I
My wicked ways might soon desert.

MARTHA.

Frankly, now! Is there no one you have met?
Has not your heart formed some attachment yet?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What says the proverb? A hearth of one's own,
And a housewife good, it is well known,
Are better than gold or precious stone.

MARTHA.

I mean, sir, have you never had a liking?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The favour shown me everywhere is striking.

MARTHA.

I wished to say, your heart, has it
Never been conscious of a serious feeling?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Madam, a jesting mood were most unfit,
Not to say dangerous, when with ladies dealing.

MARTHA.

Ah, you don't understand what I'd be at.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'm grieved most heartily for that.
But this is quite clear to my mind,
That you are very, very kind. [*They pass on.*

FAUST.

When I came in, you little angel, then,
You knew me at a glance again?

MARGARET.

Did you not see? I could not meet your look.

FAUST.

And you forgive the liberty I took,
The mad impertinence which prompted me
To stop you on the street the other day,
As you came out from the Cathedral door?

MARGARET.

It took me quite aback. What could it be?
Nothing like this had e'er occurred before.
No one of me an evil word could say.
And then it crossed my thoughts: "Alas, the day!
Can he about me anything have seen
Bold or unmaidenly in look or mien?"

It seemed as if the thought had struck you — She
Is just the girl with whom one can make free!
Let me confess the truth! Not then I knew
What in your favour here began to stir;
But with myself I was right angry, sir,
That I could not be angrier with you.

FAUST.

Sweet love!

MARGARET.

Stay!
[*She plucks a star-flower, and picks off the petals, one after the other.*

FAUST.

What is this? A nosegay?

MARGARET.

No!
Only a game.

FAUST.

A game?

MARGARET.

You'll mock me — Go!

FAUST.

What is it thou art murmuring? What?

MARGARET.

He loves me, loves me not.

FAUST.

I guess!
Angelic creature!

MARGARET.

Loves me not,
Loves me — not — he loves me!

FAUST.

Yes!
Let what this flower has told thee be
A revelation as from heaven to thee!
Speak to me, dearest! Dost thou comprehend
All that these simple words portend?
He loves me! [*Seizes both her hands.*

MARGARET.

I am all a-tremble!

FAUST.

Oh, do not tremble! Let this look,
This pressure of the hand, proclaim to thee
What words can never speak; what bids us now
Surrender soul and sense, to feel
A rapture which must be eternal?
Eternal, for its end would be despair!
No, no, no end! No end!
[MARGARET *presses his hands, breaks from him, and runs off. He stands for a moment in thought, then follows her.*

MARTHA (*advancing*).

'Tis growing dark!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes, and we must away.

MARTHA.

I'd ask you longer here to stay
Were this not such a wicked place.
Folks seem to have nought else to do, I vow,
Or think about, except to play
The spy upon their neighbours — how
They rise, lie down, come in, go out;
And, take what heed one may, in any case
One's certain to get talked about.
But our young couple?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

They have flown
Up yonder walk. The giddy butterflies!

MARTHA.

Quite fond of her, methinks, he's grown.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And she of him. Could it be otherwise?

Scene VI. — *A Summer-house.*

Margaret *runs in, places herself behind the door, holds the tip of her finger to her lips, and peeps through the crevice.*

MARGARET.

He's coming

FAUST.

Did you fancy you
Could give me so the slip? Ah, then,
I've caught you, rogue! [*Kisses her.*

MARGARET (*embracing him and returning the kiss*).

Oh, best of men,
I love thee, from my heart I do.
[MEPHISTOPHELES *knocks.*

FAUST (*stamping his foot*).

Who's there?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Your friend!

FAUST.

Beast, beast!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis time to go.

MARTHA (*comes up*).

Yes, sir, 'tis late.

FAUST.

Mayn't I escort you?

MARGARET.

No!
My mother would — Farewell!

FAUST.

Must I begone?
Farewell!

MARTHA.

Adieu!

FAUST.

To meet again anon!
[*Exeunt* FAUST *and* MEPHISTOPHELES.

MARGARET.

Dear God! The things of every kind
A man like this has in his mind!
I stand before him dashed and shy,
And say to all he speaks of, yes.
In such a simple child as I,
What he should see, I cannot guess.

Scene VII. — *Forest and Cavern.*

FAUST (*alone*).

Majestic spirit, thou hast given me all
For which I prayed. Thou not in vain didst turn
Thy countenance to me in fire and flame.
Thou glorious Nature for my realm hast given,
With power to feel, and to enjoy her. Thou
No mere cold glance of wonder hast vouchsafed,
But lett'st me peer deep down into her breast,
Even as into the bosom of a friend.
Before me thou in long procession lead'st
All things that live, and teachest me to know
My kindred in still grove, in air, and stream.
And, when the storm sweeps roaring through the woods,
Upwrenching by the roots the giant pines,
Whose neighbouring trunks, and intertangled boughs,
In crashing ruin tear each other down,
And shake with roar of thunder all the hills,
Then dost thou guide me to some sheltering cave,
There show'st me to myself, and mine own soul
Teems marvels forth I weened not of before.
And when the pure moon, with her mellowing light,
Mounts as I gaze, then from the rocky walls,
And out from the dank underwood, ascend

Forms silvery-clad of ages long ago,
And soften the austere delight of thought.

Oh, now I feel no perfect boon is e'er
Achieved by man. With this ecstatic power,
Which brings me hourly nearer to the gods,
A yokemate thou hast given me, whom even now
I can no more dispense with, though his cold
Insulting scorn degrades me to myself,
And turns thy gifts to nothing with a breath.
Within my breast he fans unceasingly
A raging fire for that bewitching form.
So to fruition from desire I reel,
And 'midst fruition languish for desire.

[*Enter* MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What! Not yet weary of this life of quiet?
How can it charm you such a while? Pooh, pooh!
'Tis very well once in a way to try it;
And then away again to something new!

FAUST.

Would thou hadst something else to do,
Than tease me when I would be still!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, I will leave you, if you will,
And leave you very gladly, too.
No need to be so very cross.
A surly peevish mate like you
Is truly little of a loss.
My hands are full from morn till night,
And yet by look or sign you won't
Let me divine what's wrong or right,
What things you like, and what you don't.

FAUST.

The true tone hit exactly! He
Wants to be thanked for boring me.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why, without me, poor son of clay,
What sort of life would you have led?
I've cured that brain of yours, this many a day,
Of the whim-whams your sickly fancy bred;
And from this ball of earth you clean away
Had, but for me, long, long ago been sped.
Is it for you to mope and scowl
In clefts and caverns, like an owl?
Or, like a toad, lap nourishment
From oozy moss, and dripping stones?
Oh, pastime rare and excellent!
The doctor still sticks in your bones.

FAUST.

Dost comprehend what stores of fresh life-force
I gain in roaming thus by wold and waste?
Ay, couldst thou but divine it, thou, of course,
Art too much fiend such bliss to let me taste.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A super-earthly ecstasy! To camp
On mountains in the dark, and dews, and damp!
In transports to embrace the earth and sky,
Yourself into a deity inflate,
Pierce the earth's marrow by the light of high,
Unreasoning presentiments innate,
Feel in your breast the whole six days' creation,
And, in the pride of conscious power, to glow
With quite incomprehensible elation;
Anon with lover's raptures to o'erflow

Into the Universal All, with now
No vestige left to mark the child of clay.
This trance ecstatic, glorious in its way,
All winding up at last — [*With a gesture.*
I sha'n't say how!

FAUST.

Shame on thee!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, that shocks you! You have so
Much right with moral horror to cry shame!
One must not dare to squeamish ears to name
What, natheless, squeamish hearts will not forego.
Well, well, I grudge you not the satisfaction
Of lying to yourself upon occasion:
That sort of thing soon loses its attraction;
You'll tire of it, and without my persuasion.
To your old whims you're falling back again,
And 'tis most certain, if I let you,
They'll into madness lash your brain,
Or into horrors and blue-devils fret you.
Enough of this! At home your darling sits,
And all with her's vacuity and sadness.
She cannot get you from her mind. Her wit's
Bewitched; she dotes on you to madness.
At first your passion, like a little brook,
Swollen by the melted snows, all barriers overbore;
Into her heart you've poured it all, and, look!
That little brook of yours is dry once more.
Methinks, instead of playing king
Among the woods, your lordship might
Be doing better to requite
The poor young monkey's hankering.
Time drags with her so sadly; she, poor wight,

Stands at her window, marks with listless eye
The clouds o'er the old city walls go sweeping by.
"Oh, if a birdie I might be!" So runs her song
Half through the night, and all day long;
One while she's gay, though mostly she's downcast,
At other times she's pumped quite dry of tears,
Then to appearance calm again, but first and last
In love o'er head and ears.

FAUST.

Serpent! Serpent!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

Oh, I bear you!
So that only I ensnare you!

FAUST.

Out of my sight! Accursèd thing!
Dare not to name her! Nor before
My half-distracted senses bring
Desire for her sweet body more!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What's to be done? She thinks you gone for ever!
And in a manner so you are.

FAUST.

I'm near her, ay, but were I ne'er so far,
I never can forget, can lose her never.
I envy even the Host itself, whene'er
'Tis touched by those sweet lips of hers!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Indeed!
Well, friend, I've often envied you the pair
Of dainty twins that midst the roses feed.

FAUST.

Hence, pimp!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, rare! You rail, and I must laugh.
The God who fashioned lad and wench
Knew what He meant too well by half,
His noble purpose not to clench
By fashioning occasion due
For bringing them together, too.
Away! 'Tis such a cruel case!
'Tis to your mistress' chamber, man, you go,
And not, methinks, to your undoing.

FAUST.

What were heaven's bliss itself in her embrace?
Though on her bosom I should glow,
Must I not feel her pangs, her ruin?
What am I but an outcast, without home,
Or human tie, or aim, or resting-place,
That like a torrent raved along in foam,
From rock to rock, with ravening fury wild,
On to the brink of the abyss? And she,
In unsuspecting innocence a child,
Hard by that torrent's banks, in tiny cot,
Upon her little patch of mountain lea,
With all her homely joys and cares, begot
And bounded in that little world!
And I, the abhorred of God,—'twas not
Enough that down with me I whirled
The rifted rocks, and shattered them! I must

Drag her, her and her peace, into the dust!
Thou, Hell, must have this sacrifice perforce!
Help, devil, then, to abridge my torturing throes.
Let that which must be swiftly take its course,
Bring her doom down on me, to crown my woes,
And o'er us both one whelming ruin close!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ho, up at boiling point again!
Get in, fool, and console her! When
Such silly pates no outlet can descry,
They think the very crash of doom is nigh.
Give me the man that on will go,
Not to be swayed or shaken from his level!
And yet at other times you show
A tolerable spice, too, of the devil.
Go to! The devil that despairs I deem
Of all poor creatures poor in the extreme.

Scene VIII. — Margaret's *Room.*

MARGARET (*at her spinning-wheel, alone*).

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore;
'Tis gone for ever
And evermore.

Where he is not,
Is the grave to me,
The whole world's changed,
Ah, bitterly.

I sit and I ponder
One only thought,

My senses wander,
My brain's distraught.

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore;
'Tis gone for ever
And evermore.

From my window to greet him
I gaze all day,
I stir out, if meet him
I only may.

His noble form,
His bearing high,
His mouth's sweet smile,
His mastering eye;

And the magic flow
Of his talk, the bliss
In the clasp of his hand,
And oh! his kiss!

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore;
'Tis gone for ever
And evermore.

For him doth my bosom
Cry out and pine;
Oh, if I might clasp him,
And keep him mine!

And kiss him, kiss him,
As fain would I,
I'd faint on his kisses,
Yes, faint and die!

Scene IX. — Martha's *Garden.*

Margaret, Faust.

MARGARET.

Promise me, Henry!

FAUST.

What I can, I will.

MARGARET.

How do you stand about religion, say?
You are a thoroughly good man, but still
I fear you don't think much about it anyway.

FAUST.

Hush, hush, my child! You feel I love you, — good!
For those I love could lay down life, and would.
No man would I of creed or church bereave.

MARGARET.

That is not right; we must ourselves believe.

FAUST.

Must we?

MARGARET.

Ah! could I but persuade you, dear!
You do not even the sacraments revere.

FAUST.

Revere I do.

MARGARET.

But seek them not, alas!
For long you've never gone to shrift or mass.
Do you believe in God?

FAUST.

Love, who dare say
I do believe in God? You may
Ask priest or sage, and their reply
Will only seem to mystify,
And mock you.

MARGARET.

Then you don't believe?

FAUST.

My meaning, darling, do not misconceive.
Him who dare name?
Or who proclaim,
Him I believe?
Who feel,
Yet steel
Himself to say, Him I do not believe?
The All-Embracer,
The All-Sustainer,
Embraces and sustains He not
Thee, me, Himself?
Rears not the heaven its arch above?
Doth not the firm-set earth beneath us lie?
And with the tender gaze of love
Climb not the everlasting stars on high?
Do I not gaze upon thee, eye to eye?
And all the world of sight and sense and sound,
Bears it not in upon thy heart and brain,
And mystically weave around
Thy being influences that never wain?

Fill thy heart thence even unto overflowing,
And when with thrill ecstatic thou art glowing,
Then call it whatsoe'er thou wilt,
Bliss! Heart! Love! God!
Name for it have I none!
Feeling is all in all;
Name is but sound and smoke,
Shrouding heaven's golden glow!

MARGARET.

All this is beautiful and good; just so
The priest, too, speaks to us at times,
In words, though, somewhat different.

FAUST.

So speak the hearts of all men in all climes,
O'er which the blessèd sky is bent,
On which the blessèd light of heaven doth shine.
Each in a language that is his;
Then why not I in mine?

MARGARET.

To hear you speak, it looks not much amiss,
But still there's something, love, about it wrong;
For Christian you are not, I see.

FAUST.

Dear child!

MARGARET.

My heart has ached for long,
To see you in such company.

FAUST.

How so?

MARGARET.

The man that is your mate
Wakes in my inmost soul the deepest hate.
In all my life not anything
Has given my heart so sharp a sting
As that man's loathsome visage grim.

FAUST.

Nay, dearest, have no fear of him.

MARGARET.

His presence makes my blood congeal.
Kindly to all men else I feel;
But howsoe'er for you I long,
From that man with strange dread I shrink;
That he's a knave I needs must think.
God pardon me, if I do him wrong!

FAUST.

Such odd fish there must always be.

MARGARET.

I would not live with such as he.
Whenever he comes, he's sure to peer
In at the door with such a sneer,
Half angry-like with me.
That he in no one thing takes part, is clear;
On his brow 'tis written, as on a scroll,
That he can love no human soul.
I feel so happy within thy arms,
So free, so glowing, so fearless of harms,
But in his presence my heart shuts to.

FAUST.

You sweet, foreboding angel, you!

MARGARET.

It masters me in such a way,
I even think, when he comes near,
That I no longer love you, dear.
If he were by, I never could pray,
And that eats into my heart; you, too,
Must feel, my Henry, as I do.

FAUST.

'Tis mere antipathy you bear.

MARGARET.

Now I must go.

FAUST.

Oh, can I ne'er
Hang one short hour in quiet on thy breast,
Bosom by bosom, soul in soul caressed?

MARGARET.

Ah, if I only slept alone! To-night
I'd leave the door upon the latch, I would.
But mother sleeps so very light,
And, were we caught by her, I should
Drop dead upon the spot, I vow.

FAUST.

She need not know, thou angel, thou!
Here is a phial! Let her but take
Three drops of this, and it will steep
Nature in deep and pleasing sleep.

MARGARET.

What would I not do for thy sake?
Thou'rt sure it will not do her harm?

FAUST.

Would I advise it, else?

MARGARET.

There's some strange charm,
When I but look on you, that still
Constrains me, love, to do your will.
I have already done so much for you,
That scarce aught else is left for me to do. [*Exit.*

Enter MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The silly ape! Is't gone?

FAUST.

So, then,
Thou hast been playing spy again?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I heard distinctly all that passed.
You had, sir doctor, first and last,
A stiffish dose of catechising.
I'm sure, I hope 'twill do you good!
It certainly is not surprising
These silly-pated wenches should
Be always anxious to discover
If in his prayers and pace their lover
Jogs on the good old humdrum way.
"If pliable in that," think they,
"Us too he'll placidly obey."

FAUST.

Thou monster, thou dost not perceive
How such a loving faithful soul,
Full of her faith, which is
To her the one sole pledge of endless bliss,
Is racked by pious anguish, to believe
Him that she dotes on doomed to everlasting dole.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thou supersensual sensualist, a flirt,
A doll, a dowdy, leads thee by the nose.

FAUST.

Thou vile abortion thou of fire and dirt!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What skill in physiognomy she shows!
She turns, she can't tell how, when I am present;
This little mask of mine, it seems, reveals
Meanings concealed, but certainly unpleasant;
That I'm a genius, past mistake she feels:
The devil's self, perhaps, for aught she knows.
Well, well, to-night!

FAUST.

What's that to you?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oho! In that I have my pleasure, too.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *At the Well.*

MARGARET *and* BESSY *with pitchers.*

BESSY.

What! Barbara? Not heard the news of her?

MARGARET.

Not I. Across the door I rarely stir.

BESSY.

Oh, never doubt it!
To-day Sibylla told me all about it!
She's made a rare fool of herself at last.
This comes of her fine airs and flighty jinks!

MARGARET.

How so?

BESSY.

It won't keep down. That's long, long past.
She feeds for two now, when she eats and drinks.

MARGARET.

Alas!

BESSY.

She's rightly served, the jade!
For all the fuss she with the fellow made!

Such gadding here, such gadding there,
At village wake, at dance, and fair;
Must be first fiddle, too, everywhere;
He was treating her always with tarts and wine;
Set up for a beauty, she did, so fine,
And yet was so mean, and so lost to shame,
She took his presents, though, all the same.
And then the hugging, and the kissing!
So the upshot is, her rose is missing.

MARGARET.

Poor thing!

BESSY.

What! Pity her, and her sinning!
When any of us was at the spinning,
Mother kept us indoors after dark.
But she was so sweet upon her spark,
On the bench by the door, and in the dark walk,
No hour was too long for their toying and talk.
So her fine fal-lals now my lady may dock,
And do penance at church in the sinner's smock.

MARGARET.

But he will make her his wife, of course!

BESSY.

A fool if he did! A lad of mettle
Can have lots of choice, or ever he settle.
Besides, he's off.

MARGARET.

How could he do it?

BESSY.

If she should get him, she's sure to rue it.
The boys will tear her garland, and we
Strew chopped straw at her door, you'll see. [*Exit.*

MARGARET (*going home*).

What railing once rose to my lip,
If any poor girl made a slip!
My tongue hard words could scarcely frame
Enough to brand another's shame.
It looked so black, that blacken it
Howe'er I might, they seemed unfit
To stamp its blackness infinite.
I blessed myself and my nose uptossed,
And now I, too, in sin am lost.
And yet, — and yet, — alas! the cause,
God knows, so good, so dear, it was!

SCENE II. — ZWINGER.

In the niche of the wall a devotional image of the Mater Dolorosa, *and in front of it pots of flowers.*

MARGARET (*placing fresh flowers in the pots*).

Oh, thou, the sorest
Pangs that borest,
On mine look down with face benign!

With anguish eying
Thy dear Son dying,
The sword that pierced His heart in thine.

Thou to the Father gazest,
And sighs upraisest,
For His and for thy mortal pine.

"And now, I, too, in sin am lost"

Photogravure after the painting by A. Liezen Meyer

Manet

Oh, who can feel, as thou,
Thy agony, that now
Tears me and wears me to the bone!
How this poor heart is choked with tears,
All that it yearns for, all it fears,
Thou knowest, thou, and thou alone!

Still wheresoe'er I go,
What woe, what woe, what woe
Is in my bosom aching!
When to my room I creep,
I weep, I weep, I weep;
My heart is breaking.

The bow-pots at my window
I with my tears bedewed,
When over them at morn, to pluck
These flowers for thee, I stood.

Brightly into my chamber shone
The sun, when dawn grew red;
Already there, all woebegone,
I sat upon my bed.

Help, sufferer divine!
Save me, oh, save
From shame and from the grave!
And thou, the sorest
Pangs that borest,
On mine look down with countenance benign!

Scene III. — *Night.*

Street in front of Margaret's *door.*

VALENTINE.

At drinking-bouts, when tongues will wag,
And many are given to boast and brag,
When praises of their own pet dears
Were dinned by comrades in my ears,
And drowned in bumpers, I was able,
My elbow planted on the table,
To bide my time, and calmly stayed,
Listening to all their gasconade.
Then with a smile my beard I'd stroke,
And take a full glass in my hand;
"Each to his fancy!" up I spoke,
"But who is there in all the land
To match with my dear Gretel, — who
Is fit to tie my sister's shoe?"
All round the room there went a hum,
Hob, nob! Kling! Klang! "He's right!" they cried.
"Of her whole sex she is the pride."
Then all the boasters, they sat dumb.
And now — oh, I could tear my hair,
And dash my brains out in despair! —
Now every knave will think he's free
To have his gibe and sneer at me!
And, like a bankrupt debtor, I
At each chance word must sit and fry.
Smash them all up I might: what though?
I could not call them liars, — no!

What's here? Ha! skulking out of view?
If I mistake not, there are two.
If it be he, at him I'll drive;
He shall not quit this spot alive!

Enter FAUST *and* MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST.

How from the window of yon sacristy
The little lamp's undying flame doth glimmer,
While at the sides it flickers dim and dimmer,
And thicks the darkness round! Ah, me!
Such midnight is it in my breast.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And I feel like a tom-cat, love distressed,
That up fire-ladders slily crawls,
And steals on tiptoe round the walls;
I burn with quite a virtuous glow,
Half thievish joy, half concupiscence, so
Does the superb Walpurgis Night
Already thrill me with delight.
Just one night more, 'tis here, and then
One gets some real fun again.

FAUST.

Look! What is that is glimmering there?
The treasure rising to the upper air?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thou shalt ere long the pleasure test
Of digging up the little chest.
I took a squint at it to-night.
Such lion-dollars broad and bright!

FAUST.

How! Not a trinket? Not a ring,
To deck her out, my love, my sweet?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I think I saw with them a string
Of pearls, or something just as neat.

FAUST.

'Tis well! It vexes me to go
To her without some gift to show.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis not a thing to feel dismay for,
To have some pleasure you don't pay for!
Now heaven with stars is all aglow.
A genuine tidbit you shall hear;
A moral song I'll sing her, so
More thoroughly to befool the dear.

(*Sings to the lute.*)

Katrina, say,
What makes you stay,
Ere dawn of day,
Before your sweetheart's door so?
Away, away!
The springald gay
Lets in a May,
Goes out a May no more so!

Walk still upright!
If once you're light,
Why then, Good-night!
Poor things, 'twill ill bestead you.
Refrain, refrain!
Let no false swain
Your jewel gain,
Till with the ring he wed you!

VALENTINE (*coming forward*).

For whom are you caterwauling? Curst
Ratcatcher you! Out, trusty whinger!
To the devil with the jingler first,
Then packing after it send the singer!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The lute is cracked! 'Tis ruined for the nonce.

VALENTINE.

Have at you! Now to crack your sconce!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Tackle him, doctor! Courage, hey!
Stick close, and, as I bid you, do.
Out with your duster! Thrust away!
I'll do the parrying for you.

VALENTINE.

Then parry that!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And wherefore not?

VALENTINE.

That too!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Just so.

VALENTINE.

I'd swear the devil fought!
What say you, then, to that? My hand's benumbed.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Thrust home!

VALENTINE.

Oh, oh!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The bumpkin has succumbed.
Let us be off! We must evaporate!
The hue and cry is up! Hark! What a clatter!
With the police I might make things all straight,
But with the courts 'tis quite another matter!
[*Exeunt.*

MARTHA (*at window*).

Help! Murder!

MARGARET (*at window*).

Help! A light! A light!

MARTHA (*as before*).

They brawl and scuffle, shout and fight.

PEOPLE.

Here's one of them already dead.

MARTHA (*coming out*).

The murdering villains! Have they fled?

MARGARET (*coming out*).

Who's this, lies here?

PEOPLE.

Your mother's son.

MARGARET.

Almighty God! I am undone.

VALENTINE.

I'm dying! Sooner done than said.
Why, women, why do ye
Stand howling, whimpering there? I'm sped!
Come close, and list to me!
[*All come round him.*
Look, Gretchen! You're but young, — by far
Too shy and simple yet! You are
A bungler in your trade.
Soft in your ear a friendly hint!
You are a whore; so never stint,
But be right out a jade.

MARGARET.

Brother! Great God! What mean you?

VALENTINE.

Shame!
Out of your antics leave God's name!
What's done, alas the day! is done,
And you must run the course of sin.
You on the sly begin with one,
But several soon come trooping in,
And, once you to a dozen fall so,
Soon all the town will have you also!

When shame is born, she's to the light
Brought stealthily 'mid grief and fears,
And she is in the veil of night
Wrapped over head and ears.
Yea, folks would kill her an' they might,
But grown, as grow she will apace,
She flaunts it in the broad daylight,
And yet she wears no fairer face.
Nay, it grows uglier every way,
The more she seeks the light of day.

I see the time — 'tis coming — when
Each honest-hearted citizen,
As from a plague-infected corpse,
Will turn aside from thee, thou whore!
Thy heart will fail thee with remorse,
When people look thee in the face.
No more thou'lt wear a golden chain;
Nor stand in church by the altar floor,
Nor in a collar of dainty lace
Shine foremost at the dance again.
In some dark wretched nook thou'lt hide,
With cripples and beggars and nought beside;
And even though God forgiveness grant thee,
My curse upon the earth will haunt thee!

MARTHA.

Commend your soul to God! Would you
Lay on it the sin of slander, too?

VALENTINE.

Thou shameless bawd, could I but smite
Thy wizened carcass, then I might
For all my sins of every kind
Full absolution hope to find.

MARGARET.

Oh, brother! Rack me not, oh, pray!

VALENTINE.

Have done with tears! Have done, I say!
To honour when you bade farewell,
You dealt my heart its heaviest blow.
Now like a soldier, stout and fell,
Through Death's long sleep to God I go.

Scene IV. — *Cathedral.*

Service, Organ, and Anthem.

Margaret *amongst a number of people.* Evil Spirit *behind her.*

EVIL SPIRIT.

How different, Margaret, was't with thee,
When thou, still, still all innocence,
Camest to the altar here,
And from the well-thumbed little book
Didst prattle prayers that were
Half childish playfulness,
Half God within the heart.
Margaret!
How is it with thy head?
Within thy heart
What guiltiness?
Art praying for thy mother's soul, that slept
Away to long, long agonies through thee?
Upon thy threshold whose the blood? —
And 'neath thy heart stirs not
What now is quickening there,
And with its boding presence racks
Itself and thee?

MARGARET.

Woe! Woe!
Oh, could I rid me of the thoughts
That, spite of me,
Come rushing o'er my brain!

CHOIR.

Dies iræ, dies illa
Solvet sæclum in favilla! [*Organ plays.*

EVIL SPIRIT.

Horror lays hold on thee!
The judgment-trumpet sounds!
The graves rock to and fro!
And thy heart, from
Its ashy rest,
Incorporate anew
For fiery pangs,
Shudders into life!

MARGARET.

Would I were out of this!
I feel as though
The organ choked my breath,
As though the anthem drew
The life-blood from my heart!

CHOIR.

Judex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet adparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit.

MARGARET.

It feels so close!
The pillars of the wall
Press in upon me,
The arches of the roof
They weigh me down! — Air!

EVIL SPIRIT.

Hide thyself! Sin and shame
Will not be hidden. —
Air? Light?
Woe to thee!

CHOIR.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus ?
Quem patronum rogaturus ?
Cum vix justus sit securus ?

EVIL SPIRIT.

From thee the saints in bliss
Their faces turn away.
To reach their hands to thee
Makes the pure shudder! Woe!

CHOIR.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus ?

MARGARET.

Neighbour! Your smelling-bottle!

[*Swoons.*

Scene V. — *Walpurgis Night.*

The Harz Mountains. District of Schirke and Elend.

Faust, Mephistopheles.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Do you not wish you had a broomstick, friend ?
Oh, for a he-goat, rough, and tough, and strong!
We're still a long way from our journey's end.

FAUST.

This knotted staff's enough for me, so long
As I feel fresh upon my legs. What boots
To cut our journey short, howe'er it lags ?
To thread this maze of valleys all at rest,

And then to clamber up to yonder crags,
From which the fountain ever-babbling shoots,
'Tis this which gives our journey all its zest.
The birchen spray is kindling with the spring,
And even the dull pines feel its quickening;
Shall it not also make our limbs more brisk?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of that I feel no trace, nor will.
My body is all winter-chill.
Would that our path lay over frost and snow!
How sadly the red moon's imperfect disk
Moves up the sky with her belated glow,
And gives so bad a light that we run bump
At every step against some rock or stump!
By your permission, I will hail
A Will-o'-Wisp. Out there I see
One burning merrily. So ho,
My friend! Will you before us sail?
Why will you waste your lustre so?
Pray be so kind as light us upward here.

WILL-O'-WISP.

Out of respect I'll struggle to repress,
And hope I may, my natural flightiness.
A zigzag course we're rather apt to steer.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ha, ha! He fain would imitate mankind.
Hold, in the devil's name, straight on, or, mind,
I'll blow your flickering light out!

WILL-O'-WISP.

'Twould appear
That you are master of the household here,

So I'll essay to do your bidding rightly.
But mind! the mountain's magic-mad to-day,
And if a Will-o'-Wisp's to light the way,
You must not deal with him too tightly.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, *and* WILL-O'-WISP.

(*In alternating song.*)

Now we're in the sphere, I deem,
Of enchantment and of dream.
Lead us on, thou meteor-gleam,
Lead us rightly, and apace,
To the deserts vast of space!
See, only see, tree after tree,
How thick and swift behind they drift,
And crag and clift make mop and mow.
And the long-snouted crags below,
Hark, how they snort, and how they blow!

Over moss and over stone,
Brook and brooklet race along.
What noise is that, around, above?
Hark, again! The sounds of song,
Lovers lamenting and making moan,
Loosing their laden hearts in sighs,
Voices we knew in the days that are flown,
When to live and to love were paradise?
All that we hope for, all that we love,
Throbs in the heart and thrills in the brain,
And fabling Echo, like the tale
Of olden times, o'er hill and dale
Reiterates the strain!

Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! More near, more near!
The jargon rises shrill and clear.
The owl, the pewit, and the jay,
All awake and abroad are they?

Be these salamanders there,
Long of leg and huge of paunch,
That go striding through the brakes?
Lo, the great roots, gaunt and bare,
How from rock and bank they branch!
Wreathed like intertangling snakes,
In coils fantastic, through the air
They stretch to scare and to ensnare us,
From wart-like knots, with life instinct,
Darting polyp-fibres, linked
To enmesh and overbear us!
And see! the mice of every hue,
How they hustle, and how they speed,
Through the moss and through the heather!
Up and down the fireflies, too,
Flit and flicker, thronged together,
To bewilder and mislead!

But what means this glamour? Say,
Which is moving, we or they?
All about us seems to spin,
Rocks and trees, that gape and grin,
And Will-o'-Wisps, that, low and high,
Flare, and flash, and multiply.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Grasp my skirt, and hold it tight,
Here's a central peak, where we
May with eyes of wonder see
The mountain all with Mammon bright.

FAUST.

Through chasm and cleft how strangely gleams
A dull red light as of the dawn!
Down to the very depths it streams,
Where gloomiest abysses yawn.

There clouds and exhalations rise,
Here from the mists light glimmers soft,
Now like fine threads it winds and plies,
Then like a fountain leaps aloft.
Here in a hundred veins it coils,
For many a rood, the valley through,
There, shut within yon gorge's toils,
In sparkles scatters out of view.
Near us, like sprinkled sand of gold,
Are flame-sparks strewn upon the air,
And now, through all its height, behold,
The wall of rocks is kindling there!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Doth not Sir Mammon rarely light
His halls up for our sports to-night?
Lucky you've seen it! I can hear,
Even now, his boisterous guests are near.

FAUST.

How through the air the storm-blast raves and hisses!
It smites my neck, shock after shock.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You'll have to clutch the old ribs of the rock,
Or it will hurl you down to yon abysses.
O'er the midnight a thick mist broods.
Hark to the crashing through the woods!
To and fro, the boughs between,
The affrighted owlets flit.
Hark, the columns, how they split,
Of the palaces evergreen!
Hear the branches straining, snapping,
The giant tree-stems' mighty moaning,
The huge roots yawning, creaking, groaning;

Each across the other clapping,
Down they crash, and thunder all,
In mad and intertangled fall:
And through the cliffs with ruin strewn
The wild winds whiz, and howl, and moan.
Voices o'er us dost thou hear?
Voices far, and voices near?
All the mountain-range along
Streams a raving witches' song.

WITCHES (*in chorus*).

The witches are for the Brocken bound, —
The stubble is yellow, the blade is green, —
There shall a mighty throng be found,
Sir Urian seated aloft between.
Right over stock and stone they go,
Beldame and buck-goat, hilloah, hilloah!

A VOICE.

Old Baubo comes alone; astride
A farrow-sow behold her ride!

CHORUS.

To whom is honour due be honour!
Dame Baubo, advance, and lead the way!
A sturdy sow, with a dame upon her,
Is guide full meet for our troop so gay.

A VOICE.

What road came you by?

A VOICE.

By Ilsenstein.
I peeped, as I passed on my midnight prowl,

Into the nest of the hornèd owl!
And didn't she open her eyes on mine?

A VOICE.

To hell with you, old wizen-face!
Why are you riding at such a pace?

A VOICE.

She grazed me as she passed. Just see,
The jade, how she has wounded me!

WITCHES' CHORUS.

The way is wide, the way is long.
Is this not a jolly bedlam throng?
The pitchfork pricks, and the broom it scratches,
The babe is stifled, the mother she hatches.

WIZARDS. HALF-CHORUS.

We crawl like snails; the womenkind
Have left us far and far behind;
For woman, when to hell she rides,
Outstrips us by a thousand strides.

OTHER HALF.

That's not at all the way we view it.
She takes a thousand strides to do it.
But, post howe'er she may, the man
Does it at once in a single span.

A VOICE (*above*).

From Felsensee, come away, come away!

VOICES (*from below*).

Up through the sky we fain would fly.
We've washed, and we're clean, as clean may be,
But barren for evermore are we.

BOTH CHORUSES.

The wind is down, and the stars are flown,
The wan moon hides her woe-worn face,
Along the dark shoot flame and spark,
To mark the wizards' roaring chase.

VOICE (*from below*).

Hold hard! Hold hard! Behind I'm left.

VOICE (*from above*).

Who is calling there from the rocky cleft?

A VOICE (*from below*).

Oh, take me with you! Three hundred year
Have I been climbing, climbing here,
But never can I the summit gain.
To be with my fellows I were fain.

BOTH CHORUSES.

Besom and broomstick, he-goat and prong,
All are good to whisk you along;
And surely the wight is in doleful plight,
Who cannot mount in the air to-night.

DEMI-WITCH (*from below*).

I've been tottering after this many a day,
And the rest are already so far away!
No peace have I at home, and here
I'm likely to light on no better cheer.

CHORUS OF WITCHES.

'Tis ointment puts heart in the witches' crew.
Any fluttering rag for a sail will do,
Any trough make a stout ship to scud through the sky,
Who flies not to-night, he will never fly.

BOTH CHORUSES.

And when you have got to the mountain's crest,
Drop to the ground, where it likes you best.
And cover the moorland all round about
With the weltering swarm of your wizard rout!

[*They descend.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Here's jamming, jolting, jabbering, justling,
Here's whizzing, whirling, bubbling, bustling!
Here's flashing, sparkling, stinking, burning,
All things topsy-turvy turning!
The real hurly-burly, which is
Very meat and drink to witches!
Stick close by me, or we shall be
Swept asunder presently.
Where art thou?

FAUST (*in the distance*).

Here!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ha! Steady, steady!
What! torn away so far already?
Then is it time I should make clear
My right as lord and master here.
Room for Sir Voland, room, I say!
My most sweet people, please make way!

Here, doctor, here, take hold of me,
And let us at a bound get free
Of this wild rabble, and its din there.
'Tis too mad even for such as I.
There's something shining there hard by,
With lustre quite peculiar. Look!
Yon bushes seem a quiet nook.
Come, come along! Let us slip in there.

FAUST.

Spirit of contradiction! Well, well, lead the way!
Yet 'tis a splendid notion, I must say;
To Brocken we on May-day night repair,
So keep aloof from all, when we get there.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What many-coloured flames! Just see,
There is a jovial company!
One's not alone, however few the folk.

FAUST.

Up yonder I would rather be.
Already flames and whirling smoke
I see ascending, and the throng
That to the Evil Spirit's lair
Tumultuously sweeps along!
There would I be, for surely there
Will many a riddle be untied.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And many a riddle be knotted, too.
Let the great world go brawling on! Aside
We'll tarry here in quiet out of view.
With men the custom is of ancient date,
To make themselves small worlds within the great.

Young witches yonder I espy,
As naked as their mothers bore 'em,
And old ones, too, that, wisely shy,
Have veiled their charms with true decorum.
For my sake, now, be civil to them all.
The pastime's great, the trouble small.
Hark! Instruments a-tuning! Curse
Upon their blowing and their scraping!
Come on, come on! There's no escaping
We must submit, or suffer worse.
I'll step before and introduce you; so
Will under further obligation lay you.
Look here, look here, my friend! How say you?
No squeezed-up shabby ballroom this, no, no!
Look onward there! You scarce can see the end.
A hundred fires are burning, row on row.
They dance, they chat, cook, drink, make love. In short,
Where, let me ask, will you find better sport?

FAUST.

Will you, in ushering us into their revel,
Present yourself as wizard, or as devil?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

My general rule's to play incognito.
On gala-days, however, one may show
One's orders. With no garter am I decked,
But here the horse hoof's held in high respect.
Dost see yon snail come crawling up? 'Tis clear,
Her tentacles already have found out
There's something more than common hereabout.
Even if I would forswear myself, I could not here.
But come along! From fire to fire we'll go:
I will the pander be, and you the beau.

[*To some, who are seated round expiring embers.*

Old gentlemen, what is the reason, pray,
You sit so far from all the mirth away?
I'd think you showed more wisdom if I found you
Right in the thick of it in jovial mood,
With lots of brisk young wenches dancing round you.
At home one has enough of solitude.

GENERAL.

Who can trust a nation's truth,
Though from ruin he may save her?
For, just as with the women, youth
With them stands always first in favour.

MINISTER.

Folks now have all gone far astray.
The good old times! that is my creed.
For when we'd things all our own way,
That was the golden age indeed.

PARVENU.

No fools were we, yet, I allow,
We often did the things we should not.
But all's turned topsy-turvy now,
Just when we most desired it would not.

AUTHOR.

Who, as a rule, will now read aught
That has the least pretence to thought?
And, as for the young people, they
Grow sillier, perter, every day.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*who all at once appears very old*).

Mankind, I feel I may assume,
Are ripened for the day of doom,

Now that I here for the last time
The Mountain of the Witches climb:
My cask runs muddy, and one sees
The world is also on the lees.

A WITCH (*who traffics in old odds and ends*).

Come, gentle folks, don't pass me so!
Why throw a chance like this away?
Observe my wares; so choice a show
Is what you don't see every day.
Within my shop, sirs, there is nought —
A shop like it you'll nowhere find —
But has its proper mischief wrought
Unto the world and to mankind.
Here is no dagger but has run with gore;
No chalice, but from it has flowed
Hot shrivelling poison through each pore,
Which, till it came, with health had glowed:
No trinket, but to shame it has betrayed
Some woman born to be beloved; no blade,
But has been drawn for treasons fell and black,
Or stabbed a foe, perchance, behind his back.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Coz, coz, you're quite behind the age.
For what it wants you have no feeling.
Now novelties are all the rage;
In these, then, you should take to dealing!

FAUST.

Grant that I may not lose my wits! Was e'er
In all the universe so strange a Fair!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To reach the top the whole mad throng are striving.
'Tis you are driven, and yet you think you're driving.

FAUST.

Who, who is that?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Observe her well.

'Tis Lilith.

FAUST.

Who?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Adam's first wife. Beware
Of her and of her beauteous hair!
Wherein she doth all women else excel.
A young man once let her with that ensnare,
It is a mesh he'll find it hard to tear.

FAUST.

Yonder sit two, an old witch and a young;
But now they danced like mad, and wheeled, and flung.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No rest from that to-night! They start anew.
Come, take a partner! We must foot it, too.

FAUST (*dancing with a young witch*).

I dreamed a dream, was sweet to see;
In it I saw an apple-tree,
And on it shone fair apples two,
I climbed to pluck them where they grew.

THE FAIR ONE.

From Eden downward, you've in sooth
For pippins had a lickerish tooth.
It glads my very heart to know
That such within my garden grow.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with the old one*).

I dreamed a dream, was wild to see;
In it I saw a cloven tree.
It had a . . .
. . . as it was, I fancied it.

THE OLD ONE.

With deepest reverence I salute
The cavalier of the horse's foot.
If at a . . . he does not scare,
Let him . . . straight prepare.

PROKTOPHANTASMIST.

Confound your impudence! Have we to you
Not proved long since, by reasons most complete,
That spirits never stand on ordinary feet?
Yet here you dance, as common mortals do.

THE FAIR ONE (*dancing*).

What brings him to our ball, now?

FAUST (*dancing*).

Oh!

He's everywhere, and always so.
What others dance he must apprise.
Each step he cannot criticise
In his conceit's no step at all.
The thing that most excites his gall
Is onward motion. If you would
In circles keep revolving still,
As he does in his ancient mill,
No doubt he'd say, all right and good:
And that especially, provided
You owned you were by his opinion guided.

PROKTOPHANTASMIST.

Still at it! 'Tis past bearing! Vanish hence!
What! in these days of high intelligence!
This devilish crew despise all rule. We boast
Our great good sense, yet Tegel has its ghost.
The years, Heaven knows how many, I have been
Sweeping out such delusions piece by piece!
But never will the human mind be clean.
'Tis labour lost — such follies never cease.

THE FAIR ONE.

Then cease to bore us here. Give place!

PROKTOPHANTASMIST.

I tell you, spirits, to your face,
I'll not endure this spirit-thrall!
My spirit cannot manage it at all.
[*The dancing proceeds.*
No one to-night, I see, my word regards.
My journey for my pains have I;
And still I hope, before I die,
To put a curb on devils and on bards.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Straight in a puddle he will squat;
He always soothes himself with that.
And when the leeches have grown plump
Upon the juices of his rump,
He's cured, and without more ado,
Of spirits, and of spirit, too.
[*To* FAUST, *who has left the dance.*
Why have you left the pretty wench that sang
So sweetly to you in the dance?

FAUST.

Ugh! from her mouth a red mouse sprang,
Even while she sang.

"'Tis but a magic shape, a lifeless wraith"

Photogravure after the painting by A. Lassen Meyer

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A lucky chance!
About such things we're not too nice.
It was not gray, let that suffice.
Who cares for trifles such as this
When on the very brink of bliss?

FAUST.

Then I saw —

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What?

FAUST.

Mephisto, seest thou there,
Far off, alone, a girl, pale, pale and sweet?
She drags herself along, and with the air
Of one that makes her way with shackled feet.
It cannot, cannot be; and yet
She minds me of sweet Margaret.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Don't look that way! It can do nought but scaith.
'Tis but a magic shape, a lifeless wraith.
It is not well to meet such anywhere.
It curdles up man's blood by its cold stare,
And by it he is turned to stone well-nigh.
Thou'st heard, of course, of the Medusa.

FAUST.

Ay.
The eyes of one that's dead, in sooth are those,
Which there has been no loving hand to close.
That is the breast Margaret gave up to me,
Those the sweet limbs whose touch was ecstasy.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thou ready gull, therein the sorcery lies.
To all that love she wears the loved one's guise.

FAUST.

What bliss! What torture! From that stare
Myself away I cannot tear.
How strangely does a thin red line,
No thicker than a knife's back, fleck
The marble of her lovely neck!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Right! I too see it, thin and fine!
Beneath her arm, too, she can carry
Her head, for Perseus cut it off, poor soul.
Pshaw! Evermore the visionary!
Come on with me to yonder knoll;
The Prater's self is not more gay,
And, if I'm not bewitched, I see
A real theatre. What's doing, hey?

SERVIBILIS.

They recommence immediately.
'Tis a new piece, the last of seven. To play
That number is the custom here.
The piece was written by an amateur,
And amateurs perform it. You'll, I'm sure,
Forgive me, if I disappear;
It is my office, on these days,
The curtain, sirs, *en amateur* to raise.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'm truly charmed to see you here:
The Blocksberg's just your proper sphere.

WALPURGIS NIGHT'S DREAM;

OR, OBERON AND TITANIA'S GOLDEN WEDDING.

INTERMEZZO.

MANAGER OF THE THEATRE.

Carnival to-day we hold,
Mieding's children true we,
All our scenery, mountain old,
Valley dank and dewy!

HERALD.

Golden is the wedding, when
Fifty years have rolled on.
But, the feud once over, then
Golden it will hold on.

OBERON.

Fairies, if ye haunt this ground,
Here do homage duly,
For your king and queen are bound
In love's fetters newly.

PUCK.

Puck, when he begins to spin,
And foot it in the dingle,
After him troop hundreds in,
With his mirth to mingle.

ARIEL.

Ariel with his silver song
Divine fills all the air, too,
Many frights to hear it throng,
Many that are fair, too.

OBERON.

Learn ye, whom the marriage-bond
Has not made one-hearted,
If you'd make a couple fond,
Only have them parted.

TITANIA.

Is he all snarl, and she all whim,
Upon them seize instanter,
Away to the South Pole with him,
And at the North Pole plant her!

ORCHESTRA (*tutti fortissimo*).

Fly's proboscis, midge's nose,
And what to these akin are,
Frog and shrilling cricket, those
Purveyors of our din are.

SOLO.

See where, a soap-bubble sack,
The bagpipe it is coming!
Hark the Schnecke-Schnicke-Schnack
Through its snub-nose humming!

SPIRIT (*that is fashioning itself*).

Paunch of toad and spider's foot,
With little wings below 'em,
Make not, 'tis true, a little brute,
But make a little poem.

A PAIR OF LOVERS.

Tiny step and lofty leap
Through honeydew and vapours;
Yet up in air you do not sweep,
Despite of all your capers.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER.

Is this Glamour, to fade anon?
Shall I believe my sight, to
See the fair god Oberon
Here with us to-night, too?

ORTHODOX.

No claws! No tail! And yet, I wis,
Undoubtedly the fact is,
That, like the gods of Greece, he is
A devil in his practice.

NORTHERN ARTIST.

My things at present, to be sure,
Are sketchy and unsteady,
Still I for the Italian tour
Betimes am getting ready.

PURIST.

'Tis ill luck brings me here; this crew,
Their din grows loud and louder,
And of the whole witch-medley two,
And only two, wear powder.

YOUNG WITCH.

Powder is, like petticoat,
For beldames old and ugly,
So I sit naked on my goat,
And show my body smugly.

MATRON.

With you we're too well-bred by far
To squabble on the spot, Miss;
But, young and tender as you are,
I hope that you may rot, Miss.

LEADER OF THE BAND.

Fly's proboscis, midge's nose,
These nude folk buzz not round so,
Frog and shrilling cricket, close
In, keep time, and sound so!

WEATHERCOCK (*toward one side*).

More brilliant throng could heart desire?
All brides, young, fresh, and active!
And younkers, full of blood and fire,
A medley most attractive.

WEATHERCOCK (*toward the other side*).

Well, if the ground here shall not gape,
These all to swallow plump down,
Right off, their antics to escape,
I'll into hell-pit jump down.

XENIEN.

See us here as insects! Ha!
With nebs small, sharp, and slitting,
To render Satan, our papa,
High homage, as befitting.

HENNINGS.

See how they crowd, and cheer the fun
Of every kind that's started!
They'll even say, ere all is done,
That they are kindly-hearted!

MUSCYET.

Itself among this witches' rout
My fancy gladly loses;
For I could manage them, no doubt,
More readily than the Muses.

CI-DEVANT GENIUS OF THE TIME.

Cling to my skirts! Whate'er betide,
Our worth will somewhere class us;
The Blocksberg's summit's broad and wide,
Like Germany's Parnassus.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER.

Who is yon stiff starched fellow, say,
With stride so pompous walking?
He sniffs and sniffs where'er he may,
"'Tis Jesuits, he is stalking!"

CRANE.

In troubled streams, as well as clear,
'Tis my delight to angle;
So you see pious people here
With devils mingle-mangle.

WORLDLING.

Yes, nothing can the pious daunt,
This place as good as any;
Upon the Blocksberg here they plant
Conventicles a-many.

DANCER.

Hark, far-off drums! Sure, some new throng
Is in the distance looming!
Oh, never mind! It is among
The reeds the bitterns booming!

DANCING MASTER.

Oh, how they fling, and jig, and flop,
Each capering as he best can.
The crooked skip, the clumsy hop,
To foot it, as the rest can.

FIDDLER.

Though mingling thus, this rabble crew
For hate would like to rend them;
As Orpheus' lyre together drew
The beasts, the bagpipes blend them.

DOGMATIST.

Critic or skeptic shall not throw
A doubt on my ideals;
The devil must be something, though,
Or how could devils be else?

IDEALIST.

The fancy, that doth work in me,
For once much too intense is;
In sooth, if I be all I see,
To-night I've lost my senses.

REALIST.

Oh, entities a world of strife
And torment do entail me;
Here for the first time in my life
I find my footing fail me.

SUPERNATURALIST.

I'm quite enchanted with this scene,
Its babble and confusions,
For as to angels I can e'en
From devils draw conclusions.

SKEPTIC.

Upon the flamelet's track they roam,
And think the treasure near is;
Here I am perfectly at home,
For doubt the devil's fere is.

LEADER OF THE BAND.

Frog and shrilling cricket, those
  Confounded dilettanti!
Fly's proboscis, midge's nose,
  You're fine musicanti!

THE KNOWING ONES.

Sans souci, they call us so,
  Us jolly dogs, that troll out;
To walk on foot is now no go,
  So on our heads we stroll out.

THE MALADROIT ONES.

Ah! many rare good things, 'tis true,
  We had of yore a hand in;
But, oh! our pumps are danced quite through,
  And we're on bare soles standing!

WILL-O-THE-WISPS.

We come fresh from our native haunts,
  From bogs and from morasses,
But who, of all these gay gallants,
  In glitter can surpass us?

STARFLAKE.

I shot down hither from on high,
  A star-fire sheen all o'er me;
Now prostrate on the ground I lie,
  Who'll to my legs restore me?

THE MASSIVE ONES.

Room! Room! A lane there! Clear the way!
  The grass snaps, where we jump once:
Lo! spirits come; but spirits they
  With bodies, ay, and plump ones!

PUCK.

Tread not, I beg, so heavily,
Like young calves elephantine;
And let stout Puck the plumpest be
To-night our fairy haunt in!

ARIEL.

If you have wings, boon Nature's gift,
Then, ere our revel closes,
Away with me by grove and clift
Up to yon hill of roses!

ORCHESTRA (*pianissimo*).

On trailing cloud, and wreathèd mist,
A sudden light has kindled;
Trees, sedges whist, a breeze has kissed,
And all to air have dwindled!

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *A Gloomy Day. Open Country.*

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST.

In misery! In despair! After long wandering wretched to and fro, to be now in prison! She, that gentle ill-starred being, immured as a malefactor in a dungeon, to wait a frightful doom! And it has come to this! to this! Treacherous, worthless Spirit, and thou hast kept this from me! — Ay, stand there, stand! Roll thy fiendish eyes in savage wrath! Stand and defy me by thy intolerable presence! A prisoner! in irremediable misery! Given over to wicked spirits,

and to the merciless judgment of men! And me, me wert thou all the while lulling into forgetfulness, with vapid dissipations hiding her hourly increasing wretchedness from me, and leaving her to perish without help.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

She is not the first.

FAUST.

Hound! Detestable monster! Change him, thou infinite Spirit, change the reptile once more into that semblance of a dog, in which he often delighted to gambol before me at night, to double himself up at the feet of the harmless wayfarer, and, if he fell, to fasten his fangs upon his shoulders. Change him again into his favourite shape, that he may crawl on his belly in the dust before me, that I may spurn him with my feet, accursèd as he is! — Not the first! — Woe! Woe! Not by the soul of man is it to be comprehended, how more than one human creature has sunk to such a depth of misery, — how the first did not in its writhing death-agony make satisfaction for all the rest before the eyes of Him that evermore forgives! The misery of this single soul pierces my very marrow, eats into my life; thou grinnest complacently at the fate of thousands!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now we are once more at our wit's end, strung to that pitch at which the reason of you mortals snaps. Why do you make fellowship with us, if you cannot be one of us out and out? Will you fly, yet are not proof against dizziness? Did we force ourselves on you, or you on us?

FAUST.

Gnash not thy ravening teeth against me thus! I'm sick of it! — Great and sublime Spirit, thou who didst

deign to reveal thyself to me, thou who knowest my heart and my soul, why link me to this infamous yoke-fellow, who feeds on mischief, and battens on destruction?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Hast done?

FAUST.

Save her! or woe to thee! The awfullest of curses smite thee for myriads of years!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I cannot loose the bonds of the avenger, nor undo his bolts. — Save her! — Who caused her ruin? I or thou? [FAUST *looks wildly round.*] Wouldst grasp the thunder? 'Tis well it was not given to you miserable mortals. To crush the first innocent man he comes across, that is just the tyrant's way of making a clearance for himself out of a difficulty.

FAUST.

Take me where she is! She shall be free!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And the danger which you run? Remember the guilt of blood, shed by your hand, still lies upon the town. Avenging spirits hover over the spot where the victim fell, and lie in wait for the returning murderer!

FAUST.

This too from thee? A world's murder and death upon thee, monster! Conduct me thither, I say, and set her free!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I will conduct thee! Hear what I can do! Have I all power in heaven and on earth? I will cast a glamour over the gaoler's senses; do you possess yourself of his keys, and bear her off with mortal hands. I shall watch outside. My magic horses shall be ready to carry you away. This much I can do.

FAUST.

Up and away!

Scene II. — *Night. Open Country.*

Faust, Mephistopheles, *sweeping along on black horses.*

FAUST.

What weave they yonder round the Ravenstone?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Can't tell what mess they have in hand.

FAUST.

They wave up, they wave down, they are swaying and stooping.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A Witches' Guild.

FAUST.

They strew and make libation.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Push on! Push on!

Scene III. — *A Dungeon.*

Faust *with a bundle of keys, before a small iron door.*

FAUST.

I quake with a strange dread. The woe of all
Mankind possesses me. This is her cell!
Here does she lie behind this cold dank wall,
And all her crime was having loved too well.
Why do I hang back thus? Is't fear
To think how I again shall see her?
Onward! Each moment's pause brings nearer her death-knell.

[*Opening the lock. A voice is heard within singing.*

My mother, the wanton,
She took my life.
My father, the rogue,
Ate me up with his knife!
My wee little sister,
She picked up my bones,
And laid them to cool
All under the stones.
Then I turned to a woodbird,
So bonnie to see!
Fly away, fly away
To the woodland with me!

FAUST (*opens the door*).

She little dreams that her beloved is near,
The rattling chains, the rustling straw can hear.

[*He enters.*

MARGARET (*hiding her face on her pallet*).

They come! Oh, bitter death! Oh, woe is me!

FAUST (*softly*).

Hush! hush! I come to set thee free!

MARGARET (*throwing herself at his feet*)

If thou be'st human, feel for my distress!

FAUST.

Thou'lt wake the sentinels! These cries repress.
[*Takes hold of her fetters to unlock them.*

MARGARET (*on her knees*).

Who, hangman, who has given you right
To treat me thus — or who could give?
You fetch me, while 'tis yet midnight.
Oh, pity me, and let me live!
Is daybreak to-morrow not soon enough? [*Rises.*
Oh, I am still so young, so young,
And yet must die!
Fair, too, they told me, once was I,
And that was my undoing. He was nigh,
My own dear love, in those sweet hours.
But now he's far away from me.
My wreath is torn, and scattered are its flowers.
Seize me not with a grasp so rough!
Spare me, what have I ever done to thee?
Oh, let me not in vain implore!
I never saw thee all my days before.

FAUST.

Can I survive this miserable hour?

MARGARET.

Now I am wholly in your power,
To do with me whatever you think best

But to the babe first let me give the breast!
All through the night I coaxed and stilled it:
They took it from me to vex my brain,
And now they say, I would have killed it,
And never shall I be blithe again.
The people, they sing songs about me,
To sting me, and flout me.
Ah! they mean me unkindly by it;
An old tale ends so. Who bade them apply it?

FAUST (*flings himself on the ground*).

Thy lover here lies prostrate at thy feet,
To rend these miserable bonds, my sweet!

MARGARET (*throws herself by his side*).

Oh, let us kneel to call upon the saints!
Look! Look! Under the stair!
Under the door there,
The fires of hell,
They seethe, and they roar there!
The fiend within,
Furious and fell,
Is making a din!

FAUST.

Margaret! Margaret!

MARGARET (*listening*).

That was my loved one's voice!
[*She springs up — her fetters fall off.*
Where is he? Where? I heard him call.
I'm free! I'm free! Let no one try
To stay me! On his neck I'll fall,
Upon his bosom lie!
He called on Margaret! stood there at the door
Through all hell's howling and its roar,

"Thy lover here lies prostrate at thy feet"

Photogravure after the painting by V. Liezen Meyer

Through devilish scoff, and gibe, and groan,
I recognised the sweet, the loving tone!

FAUST.

'Tis I!

MARGARET.

Thou, thou! Oh, say it once again!
[*Clasping him.*
'Tis he, 'tis he! Where now are all my pains?
The anguish of the dungeon? Of the chains?
'Tis thou! Thou com'st to rescue me! Oh, then,
Then I am saved. Oh, now again
Along the street I wander free,
Where first I met with thee;
Am in the cheerful garden, by the gate,
Where for thee I and Martha wait.

FAUST (*trying to force her away*).

Come with me! Come!

MARGARET.

Oh, stay!
I like so much to stay, love, where thou stay'st.

FAUST.

Quick, quick, away!
Oh, if thou wilt not haste,
We shall rue dearly the delay!

MARGARET.

How's this?
Thou canst no longer kiss?
Parted from me so short a time, and yet
Thou couldst the way to kiss forget?

Why do I grow so sad upon thy bosom now,
When from thy words, thy looks, in other days
A whole heaven flooded me, and thou
Didst kiss, as thou wouldst stifle me, always?
Kiss me, or I'll kiss thee! [*Embraces him.*
Oh, woe is me!
Thy lips are cold, they chill me through.
How! not one word! Where hast thou left
Thy love? Oh, who
Has thy poor Margaret of that bereft?
[*Turns away from him.*

FAUST.

Come, follow me! Take courage, oh, my sweet!
I'll clasp thee to my heart, when this is o'er,
A thousand times more fondly than before,
So thou'lt but follow me. Hence, I entreat!

MARGARET (*turning to him*).

And is it thou, then, thou? And is this true?

FAUST.

Oh, yes! Come! Come!

MARGARET.

My chains thou wilt undo,
Take me again into thy breast! — So, so!
How comes it that thou shrinkest not from me?
Oh, my sweet love, dost thou, then, know
Whom thou art setting free?

FAUST.

Come! Come! The night's already on the wane!

MARGARET.

My mother I have slain,
And drowned my child! To thee
The little one was given, and me;
To thee, love, too! 'Tis thou! Oh, can it be?
Give me thy hand! Yes! Yes! these are no dreams, —
Thine own dear hand. But, woe is me! 'tis wet!
How! dripping, dripping yet?
How it doth run!
Oh, wipe it off! Meseems,
There's blood upon't! Ah, God! what hast thou done?
Put up thy sword! Oh, sheathe it, I implore!

FAUST.

Let what is past be past! I can no more.
Each word thou speak'st is death to me.

MARGARET.

No, I must go, but thou must stay.
I will describe the graves to thee:
To-morrow thou to them must see
By break of day.
For mother the best place provide.
Then to her lay my brother nearest;
Me a little to one side,
But not too far off, dearest!
And the little one on my breast to the right!
No one else shall lie by me.
Ah, love, to nestle up to thee,
It was a sweet, a dear delight!
But that I never again shall know.
I have a feeling as if I must
Hang, cling to thee, and thou didst thrust
Me back — back — back! Yet, wherefore so?
Thou art, thou lookest, so good, so kind!

FAUST.

If such thou feel'st I am, come, come, love!

MARGARET.

Where?

Out yonder?

FAUST.

Out to the open air!

MARGARET.

If the grave is there,
If death is waiting, come! 'Tis best.
From here into the bed of everlasting rest,
And not a step beyond! Ah, me!
Thou'rt going? Henry, if I might with thee!

FAUST.

Thou canst! Decide! See, open stands the door!

MARGARET.

I dare not go. For me all hope is o'er.
What boots to fly? Beset with spies am I.
It is so hard to have to beg your way,
And with an evil conscience harder still;
It is so hard in a strange land to stray,
And they will catch me, do whate'er I will.

FAUST.

Then I remain with thee!

MARGARET.

Fly, fly!
Thy child will die!
Save it! oh, save it!
Away! away!

Keep to the path,
Up by the brook,
And into the wood beyond!
Strike to the left
By the plank in the pond!
Quick! Seize it, seize it!
It tries to rise!
It is struggling yet.
Help! Help!

FAUST.

Be calm! be still!
Only one step, and thou art free

MARGARET.

Oh, were we only past the hill!
There sits my mother upon a stone;
My temples throb with an icy dread.
There sits my mother upon a stone,
And to and fro she waves her head:
Her eyes are set, she makes no moan,
Her hand is heavy as lead.
She slept so long, no more she'll wake;
She slept, that we our delight might take
That was a happy time!

FAUST.

Thou'rt deaf to all remonstrance, prayer,
And I perforce must bear thee hence.

MARGARET.

Unhand me! Cruel one, forbear!
I will endure no violence.
Lay not this murderous grasp on me.
Time was, I gave up all to pleasure thee!

FAUST.

The day is breaking! Darling! Darling!

MARGARET.

Ay!
The day, indeed! The last day draweth nigh.
It should have been my wedding-day. Let no one know
That thou hast been with Margaret before.
Woe to my garland, woe!
Already all is o'er.
Love, we shall meet once more,
But not in the dance, ah, no!
The multitude, they come!
So hushed, you cannot hear the hum.
The lanes, the streets, the square,
Scarce hold the thousands there.
The bell! Hark to its boom!
The staff of doom
Is broken. How they bind me, blind me!
Now to the seat of blood they drag me off;
And every neck doth feel
The quiver of the steel,
That's quivering for mine!
Now lies the world all silent as the grave.

FAUST.

Oh, that I never had been born!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*appears at the door*).

Away!
Away! Or you are lost for ever!
Truce to this waiting and prating, this bootless delay!
My horses shiver!
The morning is dawning gray!

MARGARET.

What's that, sprang from the ground? I know its face!
Send him away! 'tis he! 'tis he!
What should he do in a holy place?
He comes for me.

FAUST.

Thou shalt — must live!

MARGARET.

Judgment of God!
Myself unto Thy mercy I resign!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Come! Come! How's this? You will not stir?
I'll leave you in the lurch with her.

MARGARET.

Thine am I, Father, thine!
Save me! Ye angels! Ministers of light
Compass me round with your protecting might!
Henry, I shudder as I think of thee.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

She's judged.

VOICE (*from above*).

She's saved.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Away with me!
[*Disappears with* FAUST.

VOICE (*from within, dying away*).

Henry! Henry!

Faust

A Tragedy

Part II.

Faust: A Tragedy

ACT I.

Scene I. — *A Beautiful Landscape.*

Faust *reclining in a flowery meadow, wearied, restless, trying to sleep.*

Twilight.

(*A troop of elves flitting round him, graceful little forms.*)

ARIEL.

(*Song, accompanied by Eolian harps.*)

When the spring-time, scattering flowers,
Robes in verdure hill and glen,
When green meadows, bright with showers,
Gladden all the sons of men,
Little elves, where spirits languish,
Haste their troubled fears to still;
They are grieved by mortal's anguish,
Be the mourner good or ill.

Ye, who in airy circles round him float,
Here show that ye are elves of noble note.
Soothe into calm his heart's distressful fray,
Pluck out the burning arrows of remorse,
Wash from his spirit all its past dismay;

Night hath four periods in her solemn course,
Now fill them kindly up without delay!
Pillow his head on yon cool bank, and then
Bathe him in dew from Lethe's stream; anon
Will his cramp-stiffened limbs relax again,
When all refreshed he wakens with the dawn.
Do the elves' fairest 'hest aright,
Restore him to the blessèd light!

CHORUS.

When across the emerald meadows
Warm and fragrant breezes play,
Closing round in misty shadows,
Softly falls the twilight gray;
Whispers gently peace to mortals,
Rocks the heart to childlike rest;
Closes up the daylight's portals
To those wearied eyes unblest.

Now the night is deeply darkling,
Gleams out hallowed star on star,
Lights of power, or faintly sparkling,
Twinkle near, and gleam afar.
In the lake they sparkle tender,
Gleam in yon clear vault profound;
Reigns the moon in full-orbed splendour,
Perfecting the peace around.

See, the hours of night have vanished,
Joy and grief have passed away.
Wake! rejoice! thy pain is banished,
Trust the new-advancing day.
Valeś grow green, hills steep and steeper,
Shadows deepen thick with leaves,
And the harvest to the reaper
In long silvery billows heaves.

Fix thy gaze in yonder glory,
Wouldst thou win thy wish and keep,
Frail the spell that resteth o'er thee,
Fling away the husk of sleep!
Though the crowd grow pale and waver,
Onward thou, with dauntless soul!
Gallant heart is baffled never,
Striving to a noble goal!

[*A tremendous clangour indicates the approach of the Sun.*

ARIEL.

Hark, the ringing hours of morn!
Pealing unto spirit ears,
Lo, another day is born,
Lo, another dawn appears!
Adamantine gates are crashing,
Phœbus' car-wheels rattling, clashing,—
What clang harbingers the sun!
Trump and clarion pealing clear,
Dazzling eye and stunning ear!
Hence! Our elfin reign is done.
Slip into your flowery cells,
Couch in lone, untrodden dells,
To the clefts and thickets come!
Day will all your powers benumb.

FAUST (*awaking*).

Life's pulses dance with fresh and bounding pace,
The ethereal splendours of the dawn to greet;
Thou, earth, thou too this night didst hold thy place,
And breathest with new vigour at my feet,
Bid'st joy even now within my breast grow rife,
And high resolves dost stir with kindling heat,
To scale life's topmost heights through toil and strife!
Now lies the world in morning's twilight beam,

The woodland rings with thousand-voicèd life,
All through the valley misty hazes stream,
Yet to its depths doth heaven's clear radiance creep,
And, bathed in freshness, wood and thicket gleam,
From dewy clefts where late they lay asleep;
The glades are dappled with a thousand dyes,
Where flower and leaflet trembling pearls do weep,
And all around grows fair as Paradise!

Aloft the giant peaks, far-gleaming bright,
Proclaim the hour at hand, that fires the skies;
They feel the first flush of the eternal light,
That finds its way betimes to us below.
Now o'er the green slopes of yon Alpine height
The advancing splendour spreads a livelier glow,
And, step by step, it gains the lower ground.
Lo, the broad sun! And blinded with the flow,
That stings the shrinking sight, I turn me round.

So when a hope, by long devotion fanned,
Hath won the height of its desire and found
Fulfilment's portals wing-like wide expand,
But now from yonder depths eternal leaps
A whelming burst of flame, amazed we stand;
Life's torch we'd fain illumine there, when sweeps
A sea of fire around us, eddying fast —
Is't love? is't hate? that round us hotly creeps,
With joy and pain, in alternation vast, —
So that once more to earth we turn our gaze,
And shrinking childhood's mantle round us cast.

So then behind me let the sunbeams blaze!
The waterfall, that down yon chasm is roaring,
I view with deepening rapture and amaze.
Now, in a myriad broken runlets pouring,
It bounds from ledge to ledge, and, shattering there,
Shoots up, in spray and filmy vapour soaring.

Yet o'er this turmoil how divinely fair
The rainbow's many-tinted arch is wound,
Now pencilled clear, now melting into air,
A dewy cool diffusing far around,
A mirror this of mortal coil and strife!
And there, if well thou ponderest, will be found,
In glowing hues revealed, a type of life.

SCENE II. — *Imperial Palace. Throne-room.*

PRIVY COUNCIL MET IN EXPECTATION OF THE EMPEROR.

TRUMPETS.

Enter courtiers of every rank in magnificent dresses. The EMPEROR *ascends the throne. On his right hand The* ASTROLOGER.

THE EMPEROR.

I greet the liegemen true and dear,
Met here from near and distant lands;
My sage, I see, beside me stands,
But why my fool, is he not here?

PAGE.

Sir, on your royal train he stumbled
As we came up the stair, and tumbled;
They bore Sir Corpulence away, —
Or dead or drunk, who is to say?

SECOND PAGE.

And what was passing strange, apace
Another steps into his place;
The dress he wore is rich and rare,
But so grotesque, it makes folks stare.

The guards their halberds crossed before
The fellow as he reached the door,
As coming contrary to rule;
But see! he's here, the forward fool!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*kneeling before the throne*).

What is accursed, yet welcome ever;
What is desired, yet kept at bay;
What do men turn their backs on never,
Yet's banned and railed at day by day;
Whom dost thou dare not summon here,
Whose name in all men's ears is sweet,
Who to the very throne draws near,
Yet is self-banished to retreat?

EMPEROR.

Friend, for the nonce your jargon spare!
Here riddles out of place are sadly;
They are these gentlemen's affair.
Resolve them, and I'll listen gladly.
My former fool, I fear, has lost his head:
You take his place, and come up here instead.
[MEPHISTOPHELES *goes up and places himself on the* EMPEROR'S *left.*

MURMUR OF THE CROWD.

A new fool — so new plagues begin.
Where comes he from? — how came he in?
The old one tripped — used up, past saving:
He was a vat — here now's a shaving.

EMPEROR.

So now, my liegemen, whom I love,
Be welcome all, from far and near!

Beneath auspicious stars ye're gathered here;
For us are joy and weal writ there above!
But say, why, at a time when we
From every care would fain be free
In mumming, mask, and revelry
To take our fill of pure delights,
Should we be plagued with setting state affairs to rights?
But since you're clear they will not brook delay,
Then be it so, and have it your own way.

CHANCELLOR.

Virtue supreme, that, like an aureole bright,
Circles the Emperor's brows, his royal hand
Alone can exercise by sovereign right.
Justice! What all men love, what all demand,
All long for, and without it scarce may live, —
This to his people 'tis his part to give.
But what avails clear head, or kindly heart,
Or ready hand to play the patriot's part,
When the state's torn by feverish disquiet,
And mischief runs in breeding mischief riot?
The whole broad realm below to us doth seem
From our high vantage ground a nightmare dream,
Where forms misshapen are in chaos blent,
Where lawlessness makes law its instrument,
And error and delusion everywhere
Are rampant, and infect the very air.
One steals a flock, a woman one,
Cross, chalice, candles from the altar,
Brags through the years of what he's done,
Nor gets his neck into a halter.
Now to the court the accusers throng,
The judge in cushioned state sits proud,
In surging eddies rolls along
Tumultuously the clamorous crowd.

Yet dreads the criminal no ill
Who in accomplices has friends,
And "Guilty!" is the sentence still
Where innocence on itself depends.
So will the world in time be wrecked,
Truth, honour, virtue perish quite;
How should we there the sense expect,
Alone can guide us to what's right?
A man, not ill-disposed, in time
To flattery or to bribes will fall,
A judge, who cannot punish crime,
Go partner with the criminal.
My sketch I've drawn of blackest hue,
Yet fain had kept it from the view. [*Pause.*
Steps must be taken, and ere long;
When all or do or suffer wrong,
There's danger even to the throne.

FIELD-MARSHAL.

Oh, the mad days wherein we're living!
All men are taking blows or giving, —
Obedience is a thing unknown.
The cit behind his moated wall,
The noble in his rocky nest,
Combine at bay to keep us all,
Each holding stoutly by the rest.
Our mercenaries restive grow,
Demand their hire with angry cry,
Yet, if 'twere all paid up, we know
They'd bolt, and never say "Good-bye!"
To say what all men want's debarred,
Is to disturb a hornet's nest;
The kingdom they should shield and guard
Is ravaged, plundered, and oppressed.
None try to curb the rabble rout;
Already half the world's undone;

Kings still there be, a few, about,
But not one thinks 'tis his affair, not one.

TREASURER.

Who'd pin his faith upon allies ?
Our funds, they say, they'll subsidise,
But at the source their bounties stop,
And leak through to us drop by drop.
Again, sir, who, your wide realms through,
Keeps what his fathers left him, who ?
Where'er we turn, some new man's in the ascendent,
And will, forsooth, be independent.
Do what he may, howe'er absurd
Or wrong, we must not say a word.
We have surrendered rights so many,
We have not left ourselves with any.
On so-called parties in the state
There's no dependence nowadays;
Whether they rail at us, or praise,
We prize alike their love and hate.
Your Ghibelline, so too your Guelph,
Greedy of ease, gets out of reach.
What man now helps his neighbour ? Each
Is only thinking of himself.
The golden gates are barred; men screw,
And scrape, and snatch, and hoard, and pile,
And our exchequer's empty all the while.

STEWARD.

What plagues beset my office too !
We're trying day by day to save,
Yet each day brings me calls for more,
And cares and worries new and grave.
The kitchen never lacks good store :
Stags, wild boars, leverets, hinds, and hares,
Fowls, turkeys, geese and ducks in pairs, —

Payment in kind, — whate'er may hap,
Come duly in, to fill the gap.
But now our wine is running low.
Butts upon butts we once did own,
All the best growths, the finest years,
Piled in the cellar, tiers on tiers;
But our great nobles round the throne,
Slaking a thirst that knows no stop,
Are draining them to the last drop.
Even the Town Council are not able
To keep their stores untapped; they fly
To bowl and beaker, drain them dry,
Till the sots sink beneath the table.
Now I, perforce, must pay for all:
The Jew won't spare me: he presents
His bonds of credit, that forestall
The produce of the next year's rents.
Our very pigs we cannot fatten,
The pillow's pawned from off the bed,
And what to table comes is forehand-eaten bread.

EMPEROR (*reflects awhile, then says to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

Have you no grievance, fool, to bring us pat in?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Not I, indeed. Viewing this grand display, —
Thee and thy Court, — full trust who must not feel,
Where kingship holds indisputable sway,
And, backed by ready force, makes foemen reel?
Where loyal hearts, strong through conviction clear,
And energy to act, are ever near,
Who could for wrong or purpose dark unite,
Where stars are shining so supremely bright?

MURMUR.

He is a knave — a shrewd one too.
He lies — but with an end in view.
I'm sure there's something lurks behind —
Some what? — Some scheme to cheat the blind!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Where lacks not something in this earthly sphere?
Here this, there that: 'tis Coin is lacking here.
Not from the floor can it be scraped, no doubt;
Still wisdom draws what's hid most deeply out.
In mountain-lodes, in walls far under ground,
Gold, coined and uncoined too, is to be found.
And ask you, who can bring it to the light?
Some gifted man's Nature-and-Spirit-might.

CHANCELLOR.

Nature and Spirit? No words for Christian men!
For this they burn your atheists now and then,
As such talk is extremely dangerous.
Nature is Sin, Spirit the devil; thus
They gender doubt betwixt them — that
Deformed hermaphroditic brat.
This sort of thing won't do with us!
Our Emperor's ancient kingdom through,
Two orders have sprung up, and only two, —
The Clergy and the Nobles, — and they make
A sure stay for his throne, and seemly guard,
Defying every tempest; so they take
The Church and State for their well-earned reward.
There's a rebellious spirit brewing
Amongst the vulgar and the bad;
All heretics' and wizards' doing,
Who're driving town and country mad.
And now with ribald jests you, you, begin
To assail the men who move in this high sphere!

Hearts rotten at the core to you are dear,
For they to fools are very nigh akin!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I see the scholar, sir, in what you say.
What you touch not, for you lies miles away;
What you grasp not, no being has for you;
What you count not, you're clear cannot be true;
What you weigh not, has neither weight nor size;
What you coin not, is worthless in your eyes.

EMPEROR.

Our needs are nowise to be lightened thus.
Your Lenten Sermon, what is that to us?
I'm sick of the eternal How and When:
'Tis cash we want — hard cash! So get it, then!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

All you desire I'll get, and more, so please ye;
The task is light, and yet, though light, not easy.
The gold is there; but how to haul it in?
That calls for skill: who knows how to begin?
Only reflect, in the dark days, when tides
Of men swamped countries and their folk besides,
How he and he, in the first panic scare,
Hid what he prized most dearly anywhere!
So was it under Rome's imperial sway —
So on to yesterday, ay, to to-day.
It all lies hidden in the soil; the soil
The Emperor's is, and he shall have the spoil.

TREASURER.

Well, for a fool, he does not talk amiss;
The Emperor's ancient right undoubted this!

CHANCELLOR.

For you spreads Satan golden snares; you'll do
What is unrighteous and unholy too.

STEWARD.

So that he only bring us gifts of price,
About unrighteousness I sha'n't be nice.

FIELD MARSHAL.

Shrewd fool, to promise what by all is sought!
The soldier won't inquire whence it was brought.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And if, belike, you think I'm talking fudge,
There's the Astrologer — let him be judge!
Cycle on Cycle, Hour and House he knows;
Say, sir, what do the heavenly signs disclose?

MURMUR.

A pair of knaves — confederates clear,
Phantast and fool — the throne so near.
An old, old story! stale with age —
As the fool prompts, so speaks the sage!

ASTROLOGER (*speaks,* MEPHISTOPHELES *prompting*).

Gold of the purest is the orb of day;
Mercury, the herald, serves for grace and pay;
Dame Venus hath bewitched you, one and all,
On you all hours her loving glances fall.
Chaste Luna's full of whims and fancies light;
Mars, though he strike not, awes you with his might;
And Jupiter shows the loveliest star of all.
Saturn is great, far to the eye and small;

Him lowliest 'mongst the metals do we rate,
Trivial in value, ponderous in weight.
But mark! When Sol and Luna come together,
And gold mates silver, then 'tis finest weather;
Straightway one gets whatever else one seeks,
Parks, palaces, plump bosoms, rosy cheeks.
All this is wrought by that most learned man,
Who can achieve what none amongst us can.

EMPEROR.

His words ring double in all they say;
But they convince me not, not they.

MURMUR.

An idle tale — jest worn and stale!
Star-gazers' dreams — alchemists' schemes!
Things oft told to us — devised to do us!
For all his coaxing, merest hoaxing!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

With foolish stare they stand around;
No faith have they in hidden prizes:
Kobold and gnome one man surmises,
Another prates of the coal-black hound.
What matter, if sorry jokes one crack,
Another at sorcerers' cantrips rail,
If gout his feet with its twinges rack,
And his legs beneath him quake and fail?
Ye all the secret working feel
Of nature's ever-predominant power,
And her living traces this very hour
Up from her nethermost regions steal.
When every bone in your body grows sick,
And a something uncanny stirs in the air,

Then courage! to work with spade and pick!
There lies the fiddler, the treasure is there![1]

MURMUR.

My feet are heavy as lead — that's gout;
Cramps through my arms run in and out;
My great toe burns, and shoots, and twitches;
All over my back there are pains and stitches:
By all these signs it would appear,
There are heaps of richest treasure here.

EMPEROR.

Look sharp! I brook no more delay!
Prove that your frothy flams are true,
And bare these famous piles to view!
Then sword and sceptre I'll put away,
And with my royal hands I will,
If you lie not, the work fulfil;
But if you lie, I'll pack you off to hell!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The road there I at least should know right well!
But, sir, words fail me, adequate to tell
What unowned wealth lies waiting everywhere.
The boor, that through the furrow drives his share,
Turns up a crock of bullion with the mould;
He hopes saltpetre hidden in the clay,
And, half in ecstasy, half in dismay,
In his gaunt fingers finds rouleaux of gold.
But then the arches must be burst,
The chasms, the shafts, through which he must,

[1] The allusion is to a superstition common in Germany, that when people stumble, they are passing over a spot where a musician is buried, — being affected, as certain sensitive people are said to be, on coming to ground under which gold or other minerals lie.

Who's treasure-wise, a passage thrust,
To reach the wondrous world below!
In spacious vaults, strong-barred, untold
Plates, goblets, salvers, all of gold,
He sees around him, row on row.
There ruby-studded beakers stand,
And, if he'd drink from them, at hand
Are fluids aged as the hills.
The casks have long been turned to dust,
But the wine-tartar — if you'll trust
One who knows well — their function fills.
The essences of noble wine,
As well as gold and jewels fine,
Themselves in gruesome night enshrine.
'Tis here the wise man — pray you, mark! —
Unweariedly pursues his quest.
To hunt by daylight were a jest;
The home for mysteries is the dark.

EMPEROR.

That may be so. Gloom! What's the good of that?
Things of true worth are sure to come to light.
Who can detect a rascal in black night?
Your cow in the dark is black, and gray your cat.
These pitchers down below, crammed full of gold,
Do you with ploughshare to the light unfold!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Take spade and pickaxe, dig yourself! The toil
Will make you great, mere peasant's though it be,
And presently, emerging from the soil,
A herd of golden calves will struggle free.
Then in your transports may you without check
Yourself and your fair ladye love bedeck,
For lustrous gems give lustre great
To beauty as well as to royal state.

EMPEROR.

Despatch, despatch! How long are we to wait?

ASTROLOGER.

Such urgent longing, pray, sir, moderate.
First finish off the motley masquing show.
A mind distraught conducts not to the goal.
We must to settled calm compose our soul,
And earn by what's above what is below.
Who would have good things must himself be good.
Who would have joy must temper down his blood.
Who would have wine must lay ripe clusters by, —
Who miracles, his faith must fortify.

EMPEROR.

Then be the time in mirth and frolic spent,
And welcomer will be the coming Lent!
Meanwhile more merrily, whate'er befall,
We'll celebrate the roaring Carnival.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How merit's coupled with success
Is what your fools can never guess;
If they the wise man's stone possessed,
With wisdom they would not be blest.

SCENE III. — *Spacious Hall, with Apartments adjoining embellished for a masquerade.*

HERALD.

Expect not here old German fancies,
Devils' and fools' and dead men's dances;
A *fête* awaits you gay and bright.
Our master, when he went to Rome,

Has for his profit, your delight,
Crossed the high Alps, and thence brought home
To his fair realm a royal right.
There at the holy feet bowed down,
That right he first devoutly sought,
And, while he went to fetch away his crown,
Away for us the fool's cap with him brought!
Now we are all new-born; and every man
To whom the world has been his school,
O'er head and ears the cap will snugly pull, —
The air it gives him of a crack-brained fool,
And under it he plays sage, as best he can.
Already they break up, I see,
Some into pairs, some into groups;
And in and out unceasingly
The throng of choral singers troops.
Well! With its fooleries untold,
The world is, as it was of old,
A big fool, not to be controlled!

FLOWER GIRLS (*sing, accompanied by mandolins*).

Maids of Florence, by the splendour
Of your Court drawn here are we,
And our tribute thus we render,
Decked in all our bravery.

Woven into our nut-brown tresses
Bright flowers manifold we bear,
Silken streamers, silken jesses
Join to prank it gaily there.

For we hold it meritorious,
And a thing to make us dear,
That our flowers, by art made glorious,
Bloom and blow through all the year.

Sprays of every hue commingle,
In symmetric order placed;
You may slight them, taken single,
But the mass contents your taste.

Comely are we to the eye, as
Girls should be so gay and smart,
For the woman's native bias
Closely is allied with art.

HERALD.

Show your baskets richly freighted,
Those that on your heads are pressed,
Those with which your arms are weighted;
Let each choose what likes him best.
Quick! Till all with leaf and alley
Semblance of a garden bears.
Who but fain with such would dally,
Dealers lovely as their wares?

GARDEN GIRLS.

Choose, then, each at fancy gleaning —
Freely choose, and huckster not!
Tell in few words, full of meaning,
Every one what he hath got.

OLIVE-BRANCH (*with fruit upon it*).

Flowery blooms I envy none,
Strife of every kind I shun;
It doth with my nature jar.
Yet earth holds no gem more fair,
Pledge and token everywhere
Of peace, and what its blessings are.
To-night, I hope, 'twill be my place
Some fair and worthy head to grace!

WHEAT-WREATH (*golden*).

Nought more winning-sweet attireth
Than the gifts by Ceres sent;
What man most for use desireth,
Be your fairest ornament!

FANCY WREATH.

Motley flowers, resembling mallows,
Strangely peep from mosses green;
These are things that fashion hallows,
Though in nature never seen.

FANCY NOSEGAY.

What my name is, to declare
Theophrastus would not dare;
Yet I have my hope I shall
Please a many, if not all.
She that in her hair will wind me,
She that on her breast will bind me,
Shall, if with a will she do it,
Find she has no cause to rue it.

CHALLENGE.

Gaudy fancies, let them flower
For the fashion of the hour,
Form in guises wondrous moulded,
Such as nature ne'er unfolded!
Golden bells and sprays of green
Peer out flowing locks between.
But we —

ROSEBUDS

Shrink from sight.
Happy who on us doth light!
When the winds of summer blow,

Roses kindle then and glow;
Who such happiness would miss?
Promise, then, fulfilment, this
Is in Flora's realm the rule!
Eye, and sense, and heart fed full!
[*The* GARDEN GIRLS *arrange their wares tastefully under green alleys.*

GARDENER (*song accompanied by theorbos*).

Flowery blooms, where you have placed them,
Charmingly your head adorn,
So our fruits you will not scorn;
They'll delight you, if you taste them.

Magnum bonums, cherries, peaches,
Dusky are of hue; but buy!
Worst of judges is the eye;
Trust what tongue or palate teaches.

Let all come where, gladdening eyes
And taste, the choicest fruits invite them;
Men on roses poetise,
Apples, they perforce must bite them.

To your bounteous bloom of youth
Grant us leave, then, to ally us,
And our ripest wares, in sooth,
Shall on you be lavished by us.

In alleys gay that wind about,
In the shade of pleachèd bowers,
You'll find all you want laid out,
Blossoms, foliage, fruit, and flowers.
[*Singing alternately, accompanied by guitars and theorbos, the two Choirs proceed to arrange their wares in rows one above the other, and to offer them for sale.*

MOTHER *and* DAUGHTER.

MOTHER.

O lass, when you first came to the light,
A bonny wee hood I made ye;
Your limbs were so lissome, your face so bright,
You were quite a dainty lady.
What a bride you'll make! to myself I said,
With figure and face so sunny,
And already I pictured you wooed and wed
By a suitor with heaps of money.

But years they have come, and have passed again,
And, alas! you are left on my hands still;
For somehow or other the marrying men
Sweep by you, and none of them stand still.
No fault of yours! For with one you dance,
And flirt it and foot it sprightly;
On another you smile with a coy kind glance,
And cling to his elbow tightly.

Picnic or party, 'twas all the same,
However we might devise them;
Forfeits, Third Man, no kind of game
Could into an offer surprise them.
But all the fools are let loose to-day,
And they're brimming with silly rapture;
So, dearest, your charms without stint display,
And one of them you may capture!

[*Girl playfellows, young and beautiful, join the groups, and break out into a loud chatter of mutual confidences. Fishermen and bird-catchers with nets, fishing-rods, limed twigs, and other implements of their craft, enter and mingle with the girls. Mutual attempts to attract attention, to catch, to escape, and to hold fast, give occasion for pleasant interchange of talk and banter.*

WOODCUTTERS (*enter, boisterous and ungainly*).

Room! room! give place!
We must have space!
Trees we fell;
Down as we tear them,
They crash in the dust!
Off as we bear them,
Come push and thrust.
This to our praise,
Look, that ye tell!
Were no rough men
To work in the land,
Where, tell me, then,
Would your fine folks stand?
This truth, forget it not,
Stretched at your ease,
For, if we sweated not,
You all would freeze!

PUNCHINELLOS (*awkward, almost silly*).

Fools are ye, hacks,
Born with bent backs!
We the wise, who
Burden ne'er knew!
For, look ye, our caps,
Our jackets and flaps,
We carry them lightly,
Gaily and sprightly —
We, ever idle,
Saunter and sidle,
Slippers on feet,
Through market and street,
There to stand gaping,
Crowing and japing;
Under the hubbub loud,
Through the thick thronging crowd,

Eel-like we slip off,
In a mass trip off,
A rumpus to raise.
Whether you praise,
Or whether you blame,
'Tis to us all the same!

PARASITES (*with a wheedling air*).

Ye porters, stout of thew,
And their own brothers, you
Charcoal that burn,
Are the men for our turn.
For bowing and scraping,
Assenting and smiling,
Fine phrases shaping,
Obscure and beguiling,
Framed to blow hot
Or cold, or what not,
Just the moment to please;
What profit all these?
Fire might be given
Straight out of heaven,
In volume enormous;
But how would it warm us,
Had we no billet,
No coal-heaps to throw
On our fireplace, and fill it
With gladdening glow?
Then the steaming and roasting,
The stewing and toasting!
The real gourmet,
The licker of dishes,
Scents the roast by the way,
And surmises the fishes.
This incites him to ply
A robust knife and fork

When his host says, Come, try!
And he tackles to work.

DRUNKEN MAN (*in a stupor*).

Oh, this day shall be happy beyond all measure,
I feel so jolly and free!
Songs to delight you, and holiday leisure,
I have brought you along with me.
And that's why I drink! Drink, drink!
Join glass to glass, boys! Clink, clink!
You behind there, come out to the light!
Strike your glass upon mine! All right!

My wife she jeered at this coat of motley,
And railed as though she my ears would pull;
She fleered and sneered, till I felt it hotly,
And called me a mumming, masking fool.
But I drink for all that! Drink, drink!
Let every glass ring! Clink, clink!
Ye masking mummers, come, all unite!
When the glasses go clink, all's right!

Never say I'm cracked! for my boast is,
I know, when I want, where to get my fill!
If my host won't trust me, why, there's the hostess;
And if she won't do it, the maiden will.
So I drink at all times! Drink, drink!
You fellows there, up! Clink, clink!
Join glass to glass! Keep it up all night!
Things now, I've a notion, are perfectly right!

Leave things as they are! The joys they've made me,
What better could mortal wish to his hand?
All right! let me lie here where I have laid me,
For now on my legs I can no more stand!

CHORUS.

Every good fellow, drink ! drink !
Drain down your glasses, clink, clink !
To bench and to board stick while you are able ;
He's done for, that fellow there under the table !

[THE HERALD *announces poets of various kinds, Poets of Nature, Court and Ritter Singers, bards sentimental and gushing. In the throng of competitors no one will allow the other to obtain a hearing. One of them throws out a few words as he slips past.*

SATIRIST.

Know ye what were the sweetest thing
For me, a poet among poets here ?
This ! Were I free to say and sing
What none of them all would wish to hear.

[*The* NIGHT *and* CHURCHYARD POETS *send apologies, because they are just at that moment engaged in an interesting conversation with a Vampyre that has made its appearance recently, out of which a new kind of poetry may perhaps be developed.* THE HERALD *has to accept their excuses, and in the meantime summons the* GREEK MYTHOLOGY, *which, even in modern masquerading costume, loses neither character nor charm.*

THE GRACES.

AGLAIA.

Into life we carry grace !
In your givings give it place.

HEGEMONE.

In receiving grace retain!
Sweet it is a wish to gain.

EUPHROSYNE.

And in days of thoughtful mood,
Let grace sweeten gratitude.

The Parcæ.

ATROPOS.

Me, the eldest, have they wooed on,
Here among you all to spin;
Much to think of, much to brood on,
Lies life's fragile thread within.

That it may be pliant, tender,
Flax the finest still I choose;
Smooth to make it, even, and slender,
I shall deftest fingers use.

Should the dance's joyous eddies
Pulses all too quick awake,
Think how very frail this thread is,
And be wary! It may break.

CLOTHO.

Know, of late years they confided
Unto me the shears of dread;
For the way our elder plied it
Had its power discredited.

Spinnings worthless quite, she bore them
Through long years of life and bloom;

Threads of promise rare, she shore them,
Hurried to a timeless tomb!

I myself made many a blunder
In my young and headstrong years;
Now to keep my rashness under,
In its sheath I keep the shears.

Gladly then my hands I fetter;
Kindly I your sports survey;
In these hours of ease, what better
Than give mirth its fullest play?

LACHESIS.

To me, whose judgment wavers never,
Was the task of order given;
So my spindle, circling ever,
Never has been over-driven.

Threads around and round it playing,
I to each its path assign,
None I suffer to go straying,
All into the ball I twine.

Could I pause, myself forgetting,
For the world my heart would ache;
Days and years sink to their setting,
She that weaves the skein will take.

HERALD.

These that are coming now you will not know,
How versed soe'er in ancient lore ye be;
Gazing on these, who work such worlds of woe,
Guests you would think them, men were glad to see.

The Furies they; none will believe us; kind,
Of comely presence, fair withal, and young:
But fall into their hands, and you will find
How serpent-cruelly these doves have stung!

Crafty they are, 'tis true; but nowadays,
When every fool for failings craves renown,
Even they, not coveting, as angels, praise,
Own they're the plagues of country and of town.

ALECTO.

What boots such talk? You'll trust us all the same:
For we are pretty, young, sweet coaxing dears;
If you've a swain has set your heart aflame,
We'll go on pouring flattery in his ears.

Till we dare tell him, eye to eye, his fair
Has smiles for other men as well as him, —
That, if he's pledged his troth, he'd best beware,
For she's a fool, crook-backed, and halt of limb.

And we can make the lady wretched too;
Some weeks ago her friend said slighting things
Of her to some one else. They may, 'tis true,
Be reconciled; still we have left our stings.

MEGÆRA.

That's but a joke! I wait till they are wed,
Then set to work, and poison — such my powers —
Bliss, when it seems more surely perfected;
Men, they are changeful as the changing hours.

Let what he yearned for once be won, all's o'er,
His rapture cools, the prize its charm has lost;
For something else he madly yearns still more,
Flies from the sun, and seeks to warm the frost.

Asmodi here I bring, my henchman true;
Well does he work my will in such affairs,
Mischief broadcast at the right time to strew,
And so destroy the human race in pairs.

TISIPHONE.

Poison, dagger, not backbiting,
Mix I, whet I, for the traitor;
Lov'st thou others, sooner, later,
Shalt thou feel destruction smiting.

Turn to gall and wormwood must
What in sweetness was abounding;
Here no bargaining, no compounding!
Suffer as ye wrought! 'Tis just!

Let none say, "Forgive, forgive!"
To the rocks my plaint I bring.
Hark! "Revenge!" the echoes ring;
Who betrays, he shall not live!

HERALD.

Please, step a little back, you there behind;
For what comes next is of no common kind.
Onward a mountain works its way, you see,
Swathed on its flanks in gorgeous tapestry.
Long tusks, a snake-like snout, its head are on;
A mystery! But I'll show the key anon.
Gracefully on its neck a fair girl rides,
And with a slender staff its movements guides;
Another stands above, of stately height,
Begirt with radiance dazzling to the sight.
Two noble dames walk, chained, on either side,
One blithe and bright, one sad and sober-eyed;
One yearns to be, one feels that she is, free.
Let each of these declare, who, what is she.

FEAR.

Through this revel wild the light
Of lamps and torches flares around;
Traitor faces throng my sight,
And I, alas! in chains am bound.

Hence, ye laughers, brainless, loud,
From your grins I shrink in fear;
All that mean me mischief crowd
Close to-night around me here.

Here a friend has grown a foe;
Read him through his mask I may:
There is one would kill me; lo!
Now, found out, he slinks away!

Ah, how gladly would I fly
Through the wide world anywhere!
But destruction dogs me — I
Hang 'twixt darkness and despair.

HOPE.

Hail, beloved sisters, hail!
If these mumming sports prevail
Here to-night, as yester-e'en,
Yet to-morrow, well I ween,
You will doff your masking gear.
If we find no special pleasure
In the torches' flare, we shall
Anon in days of sunny leisure,
And with none to thwart us near,
Now with others, now alone,
Roam at will, by waters clear,
Meads with bright flowers overgrown.
Living lives exempt from care,
With nor want nor idlesse there.

Welcome guests where'er we go,
In we pass with easy mind;
For the best of cheer, we know,
Somewhere we are sure to find.

PRUDENCE.

Two of men's worst foes are these;
In chains I hold them — Hope and Fear —
From the crowd they else would seize.
You are saved. A pathway clear!

I this live Colossus lead;
Though a tower is on his back,
Unfatigued, with steady speed,
See, he climbs the steepest track!

But upon its summit, lo!
A goddess, with wings swift and wide
Waving lightly to and fro,
As she turns to every side!

Light plays round her, pure and glorious,
Sheds afar a wondrous sheen;
Victory is her name — victorious
Goddess of great deeds, and queen!

ZOILO - THERSITES.

Ugh! ugh! I come, though no one call:
Fools that you are, I chide you all;
But what I chiefly will not spare
Is Madam Victory up there!
With her white wings, she fancies, she
An eagle at the least must be,

And that, where'er she looks or stirs,
Country and people both are hers.
But let some field of fame be won,
And straight my fighting gear I don.
When high turns low, and low turns high,
The crookèd straight, the straight awry —
Then, only then, I feel aglow;
All through the globe I'd have things so.

HERALD.

Then, thou vile cur, the swashing blow
Of my good staff on thee I lay!
Now crawl and wriggle as you may!
How quickly has the dwarfish elf
Up in a bundle rolled himself!
The ball becomes an egg! — oh wonder! —
Puffs itself out, and bursts asunder!
Out comes a strange twin-growth quite pat,
An adder one, and one a bat.
One crawls off in the dust; his brother
Up to the roof flies like a bird:
Outside they'll shortly join each other,
There I've no wish to make a third.

MURMURS.

Come on! They're dancing there behind.
No! To be off I have a mind.
Do you not feel, how all about
Us flits the ghost and goblin rout?
Now they go swish above my hair —
About my feet I feel them there!
None have been hurt in flesh or bone,
But all are into panic thrown.
The sport is wholly spoiled; but this
Was what these monsters wished, I wis.

HERALD.

Since unto me the Herald's task
Has been entrusted for our mask,
I watch the door with anxious care,
Lest aught amiss should unaware
Into our festive circle steal.
No terror for myself I feel,
But much I fear, the airy crew
Of ghosts may slip the windows through;
Nor could I, if with you they mix,
Protect you from their wizard tricks.
The dwarf looked ominous to begin,
And now a swarm comes pouring in.
What every figure means, am I
In duty bound to signify;
But how may I expound to you
What is to me a mystery too?
To clear things up, assist me all!
What's this, winds yonder through the hall?
A gorgeous chariot sweeps along,
Drawn by a team of four-in-hand;
And yet it does not part the throng —
I see no crowd about it stand.
Far off with many-coloured beams
It shines, while flitting round it gleams
The light of many a starry zone,
As from a magic lantern thrown.
On, on, it snorts with giant force!
Room there! I shudder!

BOY - CHARIOTEER.

Stay your course!
Ye coursers, fold your wings! Obey
The bridle's well-accustomed sway.
Rein in yourselves, whilst you I rein;
When I incite, dash on amain.

Unto these halls due honour show.
Look how the people, row on row,
Keep gathering round with wondering eyes!
Speak, herald, speak, in proper wise,
Before we go, our name to tell,
And who and what we are as well;
For we are allegories — so
Us you are clearly bound to know!

HERALD.

Name you I cannot. Easier far
It were to paint you as you are.

BOY-CHARIOTEER.

Essay it then.

HERALD.

That you are fair
And young withal, one must declare;
A boy half-grown; yet women fain
Would see you fully grown. 'Tis plain,
You'll prove in time a pretty rake,
And with the sex rare havoc make.

BOY-CHARIOTEER.

Not badly said. Proceed! and see
If of the riddle you can find the key.

HERALD.

Dark flashing eyes, locks black as night; and there
A jewelled circlet 'mid the blackness glowing;
A robe that falls in graceful folds you wear,
Down from the shoulders to the buskins flowing.
With purple hem, and fringe of tissue rare,

Rail at you for a girl one fairly might;
Yet even now, for weal or woe, you'd be
For girls themselves an object of delight;
They'd give you lessons in love's A B C.

BOY - CHARIOTEER.

And he, this stately form, that gleams
Enthroned this car of mine within?

HERALD.

A very king, rich, mild, he seems,
Whose grace it were rare luck to win.
Nought's left for him to wish for here;
Quick to descry where aught is wanting,
Wealth, state, to him are far less dear
Than the pure joy of giving, granting.

BOY - CHARIOTEER.

To stop with this will not avail;
You must describe in more detail.

HERALD.

What's worthiest words never drew.
But the broad healthy visage, fine
Full mouth, the cheeks of ruddy hue,
That 'neath the jewelled turban shine,
His flowing vestments' rich array, —
What of his bearing shall I say?
In him one used to rule I see.

BOY - CHARIOTEER.

Plutus, the God of Wealth, is he.
He comes himself in regal state;
The Emperor's need of him is great.

HERALD.

Now of yourself the What and How proclaim!

BOY-CHARIOTEER.

I am Profusion, Poesy my name!
The poet I, who works to noblest ends
When his best wealth he most profusely spends.
Rich beyond measure, too, I am; and dare
Myself in this with Plutus to compare.
To dance and revel I give charm and soul,
And what he lacks, dispense without control.

HERALD.

This vaunt becomes you well; but we
Some of these arts of yours would see.

BOY-CHARIOTEER.

I snap my fingers! There! And lo!
Around the car what gleam and glow!
Out leaps a string of pearls!
[*Goes on snapping his fingers.*
And here
Are golden clasps for throat and ear!
Combs, too, and heaps of diadems,
And rings ablaze with rarest gems!
Small flames, too, here and there I scatter;
Kindle or not, is no great matter.

HERALD.

How these good people snatch and rush!
The giver's self they almost crush.
'Tis like a dream, the way gems fly
Off from his fingers, far and nigh.
But lo! another juggling sleight!
A sorry prophet gets the wight

From what so eagerly he clutched;
The gift slips off as soon as touched!
The pearls unstring themselves, and all
About his hand cockchafers crawl,
He shakes them off, poor fool, and straight
They buzz and flutter round his pate.
What others thought a solid prize
Turns into flighty butterflies.
For all his promises so fine,
The knave gives only golden shine!

BOY CHARIOTEER.

Masks, I observe, you indicate full well,
But to proclaim what lives within the shell
Is no part of a herald's courtly task;
That doth a keener insight ask.
But wrangle I abhor; my lord, and king,
To thee I turn my speech and questioning.
[*Turning to* PLUTUS.
Didst not to me, their course to guide,
This fourfold fiery team confide?
Drive I not well, thou standing o'er me?
Do I not reach the goals thou set'st before me?
Have I not known, with daring sweep,
The palm for thee to win and keep?
Often for thee as I have fought,
When have I ever failed? And now,
If the proud laurel decks thy brow,
Have not my brain and hand the chaplet wrought?

PLUTUS.

If need there be that I my tribute pay,
Soul of my soul art thou!" I gladly say.
Thy acts are echoes of my mind and heart;
Far, far more wealthy than myself thou art.

As guerdon for thy services, I rate
The bays more high than all my crowns of state.
Then hear me all aloud declare my mind,
"My darling son, in thee great joy I find!"

BOY CHARIOTEER (*to the crowd*).

The greatest gifts my hand shakes out;
See! I have sent them all about.
On this, and now on yonder head
A flamelet glows, which I have shed;
From one it to another leaps,
Slips off from this, by that it keeps;
Now here and there it shoots on high,
And flames with short-lived brilliancy,
But, with the most, burns sad and low,
And then goes out before they know.

CHATTER OF WOMEN.

The man, up yonder on his feet,
Beyond all question is a cheat.
Crouching behind is Hanswurst, so
By thirst and hunger wasted low,
As never Hanswurst was before.
Pinch him, he will not feel it sore.

THE STARVELING.

Avaunt, ye odious womenkind!
I know I'm never to your mind.
Whilst dames their households overhauled,
Then I was AVARITIA called:
Then flourished in our homes content,
For much came in, out nothing went!
My care was all for chest and bin!
Folks tell us now, this was a sin!
But as the wife in these last days
Has quite given up those saving ways,

And, as all evil payers are,
Has more desires than cash by far,
Her husband has a deal to bear;
Debts crowd upon him everywhere.
All that she earns by spinning goes
In treating swains, or in fine clothes;
Richly she feeds, drinks largely too,
With paramours, a baleful crew.
So on gold's charms I fondlier feed;
And now, turned masculine, I am GREED.

LEADER OF THE WOMEN.

Dragon with dragon may pinch and spare;
This is all lying, juggling stuff!
He comes to rouse the men, and they're
Already troublesome enough.

WOMEN (*en masse*).

The scarecrow! Box his ears! What, dare
To threaten us! As if he could
Grown women with his rubbish scare!
The dragons are but paste and wood:
Come, let's go at him, squeeze and tear!

HERALD.

Now, by my staff! keep order there!
Yet for my help there scarce is need;
See how the monsters grim unfurl —
As swift the flying crowds recede —
Great wings, that round them wave and swirl!
The dragons snort, and gnash in ire
Their scaly jaws, outbelching fire:
The crowd has fled, the place is clear.
[PLUTUS *descends from the chariot.*
How kingly all his movements are!
The dragons at his nod draw near;

They lift the coffer from the car,
And Gold and Greed on it appear.
There at his feet it stands; but how
The thing was done, I marvel now.

PLUTUS (*to the* CHARIOTEER).

Now from the charge, that all too heavy lay
On thee, thou'rt free: to thine own sphere away!
Here it is not; wild, tawdry, full of din
Is the fantastic world here hems us in.
Only where thou through clear untroubled air
Look'st with untroubled eye — there, only there,
Where nought delights thee but the good, the fair,
Art thou thyself, canst move with soul elate.
To solitude then go! There thine own world create!

BOY CHARIOTEER.

So as an envoy still myself I prize,
Charged with a noble mission from above;
So thee, as bound to me by nearest ties
Of kindred and of sympathy, I love.
Where thou art, there is plenty; and where I,
All feel their souls enriched, their pulse beat high.
Ofttime from side to side men's thoughts incline;
Shall they to thee or me themselves resign?
Thy votaries may in idlesse rest, 'tis true,
But mine have always endless work to do.
Nor may I work in secret and in shade;
Let me but breathe, at once I am betrayed.
Farewell! Thou grantest what is bliss to me;
But back again I at a word will be. [*Exit as he came.*

PLUTUS.

Now it is time to set the treasures free.
With the Herald's rod I strike the bolts, and lo!

The chest flies open! In steel caldrons, see,
Red golden blood heaves, bubbling, to and fro!
Hard by are ornaments, ring, chain, and crown;
It swells as 'twould engulf and melt them down.

ALTERNATING EXCLAMATIONS OF THE CROWD.

See here! see there! How treasures brim!
The chest is full up to the rim!
Vessels of gold melt down, and whole
Rouleaux of gold by dozens roll.
Ducats leap out, new-minted, bright —
Oh, how my heart leaps at the sight!
All it desired I see, and more;
There they go sprawling on the floor!
They're offered you. Quick! On them swoop!
If you'd be rich, you've but to stoop.
We, quick as lightning, shall the great
Chest to ourselves appropriate.

HERALD.

What would ye, fools? Are you possessed?
'Tis but a masquerading jest:
To-night we looked for nothing more.
Think you we'd give you gold galore?
Why, truly, on occasions such
Counters for you are quite too much.
Blockheads! with you a quaint device
Grows fact substantial in a trice.
What's fact to you, — you, always fain
To flounder in delusions vain?
O Plutus, send this rabble rout,
I pray thee, to the right about!

PLUTUS.

Handy for that your staff would be;
For some few moments lend it me.

I dip it in the red heat; there!
And now, ye maskers, have a care!
What sparkling, sputtering, in the pot!
The staff's already fiery hot.
Whoever comes too near shall be
Scorched by it quite remorselessly.
Look out! Now is my round begun!

CRIES AND TUMULT.

Oh, woe! oh, woe! we're all undone!
Let him escape, escape who may.
You there behind, back, back, I say!
Hot sparks fly out into my face.
On me the red-hot staff falls heavy:
We're all and each in piteous case!
Back, back, ye masquerading bevy!
Back, back! 'Tis madness to come nigh!
Oh, had I wings, away I'd fly!

PLUTUS.

Back hath the surging throng been thrust;
And no one has been hurt, I trust.
In sheer dismay
The crowd give way:
Still, as a guarantee for order, we
Will draw a circle none can see.

HERALD.

'Twas nobly done! A power so sage
As thine must my best thanks engage.

PLUTUS.

Still, friend, be patient. There will be
Tumult in plenty presently.

GREED.

A man may round him here with pleasure glance,
If meetings of this kind his fancy suit,
For women always are well in advance,
When there be shows or junketings on foot.
I'm not yet quite used up, not quite pumped dry,
I like a pretty woman with the best;
And, as to-night it costs me nothing, I
Will go a-wooing with especial zest.
Yet as, in such a crowd as we have here,
All that one says may fail to reach the ear,
I'll try, and, as I hope too, with success,
In pantomime my meaning to express.
Hand, foot, and gesture will not do alone,
So I must try some cantrip of my own.
I'll treat the gold as though 'twere moistened clay,
For we may turn this metal any way.

HERALD.

The meagre fool, what is he at?
Humour in a scarecrow like that!
The gold, he kneads it into dough;
Soft 'neath his fingers it doth grow,
But, squeeze and turn it how he will,
The mass remains quite shapeless still.
He to the women turns, but they
All scream, and try to get away,
And show he'll ne'er be in their books.
There's mischief in the rascal's looks.
I fear his lickerish tooth he'll sate,
Though he decorum violate.
Not to speak out were sore offence;
Give me my staff to drive him hence!

PLUTUS.

He dreams not of what coming dangers loom.
Let him pursue his pranks a little longer;

For his mad capers there will be no room;
Though law be strong, necessity is stronger.
[*Enter Fauns, Satyrs, Nymphs, etc., in attendance upon Pan, and heralding his approach.*

TUMULT AND SONG.

From mountain-height and forest-dell
The savage crew with shout and yell
Sweep on, and stay them no one can;
They celebrate their mighty Pan.
They know what none else know, and fling
Themselves into the vacant ring.

PLUTUS.

You and your mighty Pan, I know you well,
How bold the step you've taken here can tell:
Full well I know what's known to none beside,
So throw our narrow bounds here open wide.
Good luck attend you, even to overflowing!
Great marvels may anon befall.
They know not whither they are going;
They have not looked ahead at all.

WILD SONG.

Ye butterflies, with gewgaws decked,
A rough and rugged hand expect.
With leaps and bounds they come apace,
A stalwart and a sturdy race.

FAUNS.

We are Fauns, and we
Dance merrily;
Oak-wreaths we wear
In our crispèd hair,
And out from our curly head an ear,
Sharpened to finest point, doth peer;

Our noses are stumpy, our faces flat,
But we lose not woman's good will for that;
The fairest she, if a Faun advance
His paw, will scarcely refuse to dance.

SATYR.

The Satyr next comes bounding in,
With hoof of goat and wizened shin —
Both sinewy, of course, and thin!
To gaze around from mountain-heights,
Like the wild chamois, him delights.
There in the free air bounding wild,
He views with scorn man, woman, child,
Who, 'mid the low vales' smoke and steam,
Deem fondly they are living too;
Whilst he, unlettered and supreme,
Reigns sole that upper region through.

GNOMES.

A pigmy troop comes tripping now,
Not two by two, but anyhow;
In mossy garb, with lamplets lit,
Swiftly they each through other flit,
Each working for himself, and so
They swarm like fireflies to and fro —
Now here, now there, and all intent
Upon the task whereto they're bent.
To the "Good People" near related,
As rock-chirurgoeons celebrated,
We cap the lofty hills, we drain
The ore from every teeming vein;
"Good luck!" as greeting cheers us, while
The metals up in heaps we pile.
Tis all meant for a worthy end.
All truly good men we befriend;

Yet gold we to the light reveal,
That men may pimp with it and steal,
And steel to tyrants proud be lent,
Who are on wholesale murder bent.
These three commandments who shall slight,
Of all the rest makes very light.
But this is not our fault; so you
Should have, like us, forbearance too.

GIANTS.

The Wild Men we are called, and strange
To none who know the Harzberg range;
Of giant bulk, unclad, and strong
As men of yore, we tramp along,
A pine-tree stem in our right hand,
Around our loins a padded band.
With leaf and bough for apron barred;
The Pope has no such body-guard.

CHORUS OF NYMPHS.

(*They surround the great Pan.*)

He too comes here!
All unto man
In this earth's sphere
Is imaged clear
In mighty Pan.

Ye merriest of heart, advance,
And round him wheel in joyous dance;
For, being grave, but also good,
He'd have men be of cheerful mood.
Even 'neath the azure-vaulted sky
He watches with unsleeping eye:
But brooks for him low murmurs keep,
And soft winds cradle him to sleep,
And, when at noon he 'gins to drowse,
Stirs not a leaf upon the boughs;

Plants, breathing health from fairest blooms,
On the hushed air exhale perfumes;
The Nymph disports no more, but, where
She stood, drops off in slumber there.
But if, by sudden anger stirred,
His voice, his mighty voice, is heard
Like thunder, or wild ocean's swell,
Which way to fly no man can tell;
Brave hosts are scattered in dismay
And heroes quail in mid *mêlée.*
Then honour give where honour's due;
Hail him who led us here to you!

DEPUTATION OF GNOMES (*to the great Pan*).

Where rich ore lies, and, brightly shining,
Through rocky fissures thread-like steals,
The rod alone, by its divining,
The labyrinthine maze reveals.

In troglodytic fashion now
Our home in sunless caves we make,
And in the sunshine pure dost thou
Deal treasures forth for us to take.

Hard by to us has been revealed
A vein of wondrous breadth and scope,
Which promises with ease to yield
What to attain we scarce might hope.

To make it sure thou hast the power —
Then subject it to thy commands;
To all mankind a priceless dower
Grows every treasure in thy hands.

PLUTUS (*to the* HERALD).

All base misgivings we must cast away,
And with composure meet come what come may.

Erst thou hast shown a firm courageous soul.
But something terrible will soon fall out,
That present time and after-time will doubt;
So write it duly in thy protocol.

HERALD.

(*Grasping the staff which* PLUTUS *holds in his hands.*)

The dwarfs lead great Pan soft and slow
To where the fount of fire doth glow;
It seethes up from the abyss below,
Then down to depths unseen sinks back,
And grim the wide mouth stands and black.
Again fierce flames flash out on high —
The great Pan stands complacent by,
Joying to see such wondrous sight —
And pearl-foam sparkles left and right.
How can he trust himself so near?
He stoops, into the chasm to peer —
And now his beard falls in: and he,
With chin so smooth, who may he be?
His hand conceals his face from view.
Now doth a great mishap ensue.
The beard takes fire, flies back again,
And wreath, head, breast, all blaze up too;
So joy is turned to fear and pain!
The crowd rush to his aid, but none
Escapes the spreading flames, not one;
And, as they flash and dart about,
Fresh fire on every hand breaks out;
While, netted in the burning maze,
A troop of maskers is ablaze.
But hark! a cry, that scatters fear
From mouth to mouth, from ear to ear!
O night, with endless sorrow fraught,
On us what anguish hast thou brought!

To-morrow's dawn will tidings bring,
That every heart with grief shall wring.
Still from all sides I hear the cry,
"The Emperor is in agony!"
Too true, alas! the news unmeet!
The Emperor's burning, and his suite.
Accursed be they beguiled him, wound
With leaves and resinous branches round,
In roistering guise to brawl it here,
And spread disaster far and near!
O youth, youth, wilt thou never draw
Around thy joys a prudent line?
O greatness, wilt thou ne'er with law
And reason boundless power combine?
Now to the wood the flames have spread,
Their forkèd tongues shoot high o'erhead,
And round the wooden rafters play;
Nought can the conflagration stay!
Brimmed is the measure of our grief;
I know not who may bring relief.
Imperial splendour, rich and bright,
Sinks down to ashes in a night.

PLUTUS.

Enough of terror and dismay!
Now let help come into play.
Strike, staff of power, until the ground
Quake and reverberate the sound!
Thou wide and mantling air, fill full
Thyself with breezes blowing cool!
Teeming streaks of vapourous mist,
Come, and round us coil and twist;
Close the fiery ferment over!
Cloudlets, drizzling, dropping, drenching,
Dew-distilling, gently hover,
Everywhere the danger quenching,
Turning by your soothing might

Flames now laden with affright
Into harmless rosy light!
When spirits threaten us with ill,
'Tis time to use our magic skill.

SCENE IV. — *Pleasure-garden. Morning Sun.*

The EMPEROR, *his Court, male and female.* FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, *dressed quietly and becomingly in the prevailing fashion. Both kneel.*

FAUST.

Dost thou forgive our trick, sir, with the fire?

EMPEROR (*beckoning to him to rise*).

Such jests, and many too, I much desire.
Sudden I found me in a sphere of flame;
Pluto himself, methought, I then became.
Girt by thick night a cavern round me lay,
Red-hot with fire. From many a chasm and bay
Wild whirling flames by myriads ascended,
And in an arching vault their flashing blended.
Up to the topmost dome they rose, and crossed,
For ever kindling and for ever lost.
Far, far along, 'midst columns all aglow,
I saw long lines of people moving slow.
In a wide circle round me then they drew,
And made obeisance, as they always do:
Some of my Court I spied within the ring,
And seemed of thousand Salamanders king.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And so you are; for every element
To own your sovereignty is well content.

Fire thou hast proved obedient; in the sea
Plunge, where its billows wildest, maddest be,
And scarcely shalt thou tread the pearl-strewn floor,
Ere springs a stately dome to arch it o'er;
Waves of pale green, with purple edged, shall there
Sway up and down, to rear a mansion fair
Round thee, the central point. A palace home
Attends on thee wherever thou dost roam.
The very walls are all alive, and flow
With swiftness as of arrows to and fro.
Up to the strange soft sheen sea-wonders throng —
They dare not enter in, but shoot along;
Bright gold-scaled dragons round thee sport and swim;
Gapes the grim shark, and thou canst laugh at him.
Gay as thy present Court may be, and bright,
No throng like this has ever met thy sight.
Yet art thou not cut off from beauty there:
To that superb abode, so fresh, so fair,
The Nereids, peering curiously, draw nigh —
The young ones, amorous as fish, and shy,
The old ones sage: soon Thetis learns thy haunts,
And hand and lip to her new Peleus grants.
Anon thy seat on high Olympus' crest —

EMPEROR.

Those airy regions, you may let them rest.
Quite soon enough one has to mount that throne.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And earth, my liege, already is thine own.

EMPEROR.

What lucky chance has brought thee hither straight
From the Arabian Nights? If thou canst mate
With Scheherezade in inventive skill,
Take this, the highest proof of my good will —

Be still at hand, when worries of the day
Pain and dispirit me, as oft they may.

MARSHAL (*entering hurriedly*).

Your Highness, never did I think to live
Tidings of such supreme good-luck to give
As these, which to thy presence thus
Send me in transports rapturous.
Every outstanding bill is squared,
The usurer's ruthless claws are pared.
I from the pangs of hell am free;
In heaven things could not brighter be.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (*follows hurriedly*).

Arrears paid off to the last sou,
The army's all sworn in of new;
The trooper feels his blood aflame,
And wench and tapster make their game.

EMPEROR.

How is't you breathe so freely now?
Furrows no longer seam your brow.
What makes you here so swiftly run?

TREASURER (*entering*).

Ask those, sir, who the work have done!

FAUST.

'Tis meet, the Chancellor the facts should state.

CHANCELLOR.

In my old days my happiness how great!
Hear, then, and see this fateful scroll, for this
Has turned our woe and wailing into bliss. [*Reads.*
"Be it to all whom it concerneth known,

This note is worth a thousand crowns alone,
And, for a guarantee, the wealth untold,
Throughout the empire buried, it doth hold.
Means are on foot this treasure bare to lay,
And out of it the guarantee to pay."

EMPEROR.

Crime I surmise, some monstrous fraud. Oh, shame!
Who dared to counterfeit the Emperor's name?
Has he been brought to punishment condign?

TREASURER.

Reflect! That note, sir, thou thyself didst sign
Only last night. Thou didst as Pan appear;
The Chancellor said to thee, — we standing near, —
"A few strokes of thy pen, and so thou'lt seal, —
This revel's crowning joy, — thy people's weal!"
These strokes thou mad'st, which were ere morning-tide
By thousand hands in thousands multiplied.
That all alike the benefit might reap,
We stamped the whole impression in a heap;
Tens, thirties, fifties, hundreds, off they flew —
You can't conceive the good they were to do.
Look at your town, — 'twas mouldering and half dead —
Now all alive, and full of lustihead!
High as thy name stood with the world, somehow
'Twas never looked so kindly on as now.
The lists of applicants fill to excess;
This scrip is rushed at as a thing to bless.

EMPEROR.

My people take it for good gold, you say?
In Court, in camp, it passes for full pay?
Strange! strange! Yet I must let the matter drop.

MARSHAL.

'Twere hopeless now the flying leaves to stop;
With lightning speed they spread throughout the land.
The money-changers' doors wide open stand;
They cash the notes with silver and with gold,
And even allow a premium, I am told.
Thence they reach vendors of meat, bread, and drinks:
One-half the world of feasting only thinks;
Whilst in its bran-new clothes the other struts —
Briskly the tailor sews, the mercer cuts.
Toasting thy health in taverns never bates,
And all is roast and boil and clattering plates.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Who on the terraced walks alone shall stray,
Drops on some fair one, clad in rich array,
Who from behind proud peacock-fan will smile
On him, with eye on these same notes the while,
Which quickly will love's crowning favours gain,
Whilst wit and eloquence may plead in vain.
Men won't be teased with purse or scrip, when they
Can in their bosoms slip a note away,
To mate there snugly with a billet-doux.
Priests lodge them in their breviaries, too;
Soldiers, to move more freely, turn their coins
To notes, and of the waist-belt ease their loins.
Pardon, your Majesty, if what I state
From this great work may seem to derogate.

FAUST.

The superflux of wealth that, heap on heap,
All o'er thy realm in earth lies buried deep,
Is practically lost. Thought cannot cast
A limit wide enough for wealth so vast,
And fancy in her wildest flight may strain
To picture it, yet find the effort vain;

But spirits, meet enigmas dark to face,
Dare on the boundless boundless faith to place.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Paper like this, instead of pearls and gold,
Is handy, for we know then what we hold;
No need to change or chaffer! Men at will
In love may revel, drink of wine their fill:
If coin they lack, the changer's prompt with it;
And when coin fails, you've but to dig a bit.
Chalice and chain to auction must be brought;
But this good paper, cashed upon the spot,
Puts skeptics, who dared scoff at us, to shame.
People, once used to it, nought else will name.
So henceforth all the imperial regions round
With jewels, gold, and paper-cash abound.

EMPEROR.

This mighty boon our empire owes to you;
Great as the service, be the guerdon too!
Our kingdom's nether soil, be that your care.
Who may so well protect the treasures there?
That vast well-tended hoard you understand,
And, if men dig, 'tis you must give command.
Now, masters of our Treasury, embrace;
Wear, and with pride, the honours of your place,
Where, linked in happy union, all shall know,
The world above blends with the world below.

TREASURER.

'Twixt us no strife, however slight, shall stir:
I for a colleague love your sorcerer.

[*Exit with* FAUST.

EMPEROR.

As I dispense my gifts among you now,
Let each the use he'll put them to avow.

PAGE (*as he takes the gift*).

I am for sports, and mirth, and junketings.

ANOTHER PAGE (*même jeu*).

Straightway I'll buy my sweetheart chains and rings.

LORD OF THE BEDCHAMBER (*même jeu*).

My cellar, with the choicest wine I'll stock it.

SECOND LORD (*même jeu*).

The dice already rattle in my pocket.

BANNERET (*musingly*).

I'll free my castle and my grounds from debt.

ANOTHER BANNERET (*même jeu*).

Aside with other treasures this I'll set.

EMPEROR.

I hoped for joy, brave heart, fresh enterprise;
But, knowing you, one might your course surmise.
Full well I note, howe'er your coffers fill,
What you have been, you will continue still.

FOOL (*advaneing*).

You're scattering favours; give me some, I pray.

EMPEROR.

Alive again! You'll drink them all away.

FOOL.

These magic leaves, I cannot make them out.

EMPEROR.

Quite so; you'll make bad use of them, no doubt.

FOOL.

There others drop; what, sir, am I to do?

EMPEROR.

Just pick them up. They're what were meant for you.
[*Exit.*

FOOL.

Five thousand crowns! and all for me?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How then!
Thou paunch upon two legs, got up again?

FOOL.

Not the first time, but ne'er such luck I've met.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

So great your joy, it puts you in a sweat.

FOOL.

Look here! And is this money's worth?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes, knave!
You'll get for it what throat and belly crave.

FOOL.

Can I buy farm, house, cattle, then, with this?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of course! Just bid! 'Twill never come amiss.

FOOL.

What! castle, forest-chase, and fish-stream?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Good!
I'd like to see you a great lord, I would!

FOOL.

This night I'll sleep within my own domain! [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*solus*).

Who still can doubt our fool doth bear a brain?

Scene V. — *A Dark Gallery.*

Faust, Mephistopheles.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why drag me to this gloomy corridor?
Within there is there not enough of sport,
For jest and trick not ample scope, and more,
Among the motley butterflies of court?

FAUST.

Tush, tush! Time was when you were cap in hand,
Ready to come and go at my command;
But now your only aim, I see,
Is how to break your faith with me.
To act, however, I am pressed.
Marshal and chamberlain won't let me rest:

The emperor wants, and that with haste,
Paris and Helena before him placed.
These paragons of man and woman he
Has set his mind just as they lived to see.
Quick, to the task! My word I dare not break.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Such promise you were worse than mad to make.

FAUST.

You have forgotten, mate, to what
Your clever sleights conduct us; we
Have made him rich, and after that
We must amuse him *à tout prix.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No sooner said, you think, than done?
This task is a much harder one
Than ever we ventured on before.
You would pierce to a region of wonders vast,
And recklessly run up a further score
Of debts you'll be forced to pay off at last.
You think 'tis as easy a task for me
To conjure up Helena, at my will,
As it was the imperial treasury
With flimsy, fairy bank-notes to fill.
Witches, imps, goitred dwarfs, and sprites,
I can turn to all uses, and place in all plights,
But, though not to be sneezed at, our ladies below
As heroines never will do to show.

FAUST.

The same old song! The same old introduction!
There's nothing but uncertainties with you:

You are the sire of all sorts of obstruction,
And must at every turn be bribed anew!
You grumble. Still you'll do it, I know well,
And fetch them here, ere we ten words can say.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These heathen gentry are not in my way;
They live within their own peculiar hell;
And yet there is a way!

FAUST.

On with your tale!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'm loath the higher mysteries to unveil.
There are goddesses, beings of might supernal,
That sit alone, each on a throne,
In the solitudes eternal.
Round them space is not, and time still less;
To speak of them even embarrasses.
These are THE MOTHERS!

FAUST (*starting*).

The Mothers!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Afeared?

FAUST.

The Mothers! the Mothers! That sounds so weird!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And weird it is. Divinities, to you
Mortals unknown; we're loath to name them, too.

Through depths unplumbed you may their haunts
invade:
'Tis all your fault that we require their aid.

FAUST.

And whither lies the road?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Road there is none
To what has been, and must untrodden still be;
There is no road to what was never won
By mortal prayer or vow, nor ever will be.
Art ready? Neither bolt nor bar is there,
To hinder thy advance, but everywhere
Shalt thou be drifted by the empty air.
Canst thou conceive and fully comprehend
A void and isolation without end?

FAUST.

Such speeches 'tis idle with me to try!
They're of the Witches-kitchen kind,
And smack of a time that is long gone by.
Was I not doomed to mingle with mankind?
To learn and teach that all that they possess
Is mere vacuity and emptiness?
By reason schooled, if as I saw I spoke,
Strife and denial round me roared and broke,
Turn where I might, still baffled, thwarted, I
To wilds and solitudes was forced to fly,
Till, at my very loneliness aghast,
I gave myself up to the devil at last.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And with the ocean if thou wert contending.
And round thee heaved a limitless expanse,

Yet there, though death were in each wave impending,
Thou'dst see before thee wave on wave advance.
There something thou shouldst see; see dolphins leap
O'er the green hollows of the glassy deep,
See clouds sweep on, and sun, and moon, and star,
But nothing shalt thou see in that great void afar;
Thou shalt not hear thy very footfall pace,
Nor light on one substantial resting-place.

FAUST.

The best of mystagogues you rival quite,
That e'er deluded trustful neophyte!
But you reverse the rule, dismissing me
To gain both strength and skill from blank vacuity.
You use me like the cat, to scratch for you
The chestnuts from the coals. Well, well, go to!
We'll probe this business; and I hope I shall
In what you say is Nought discover All.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Before we part, your courage I commend!
The devil, I see, you fully comprehend.
Here, take this key!

FAUST.

This tiny bauble? No!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Take hold of it, before you slight it so.

FAUST.

It grows within my hand! It flames, it lightens!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Mark it but well, you'll find its virtue brightens!
This key will how to shape your course instruct you.
Follow it, and to THE MOTHERS 'twill conduct you.

FAUST (*shudders*).

Again that word! It strikes me like a blow.
What is there in that word to thrill me so?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Art thou a pedant, at new words to scare?
Familiar phrases only canst thou bear?
Nothing, however weird or strange, should make
One so long used to mightiest marvels quake.

FAUST.

I covet not an adamantine heart.
This shuddering awe is man's divinest part.
Howe'er the world may dull our feelings, still
At what is vast and mystical we thrill.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Sink, then! I might as well say, Mount! 'Tis quite
The same. From all that is take flight
Into the void and viewless Infinite
Of visionary dreams, and revel so
'Midst phantoms of the ages long ago!
Like clouds they flit and waver. In thy hand
Swing high the key! Thy body must not touch it.

FAUST (*with enthusiasm*).

'Tis well! I feel new strength, as thus I clutch it,
And for the mighty task my breast expand.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A flaming tripod shall proclaim thou hast
Into the nethermost abysses passed.
Its gleam THE MOTHERS unto thee will show.
Some sit, some stand, some wander to and fro;
Each as it haps; strange shapes of every kind,
The eternal pastime of the eternal mind,
Circle them round with every form of being.
Thee they behold not, phantasms only seeing.
See that thou quail not, for the peril's great,
But to the tripod go thou forward straight,
And touch it with the key!

[FAUST *assumes a resolute and commanding attitude with the key.*

Ay, that will do!
It will attend thee like a servant true,
And with it thou, if fortunate, shalt rise
To earth again, ay, fast as fancy flies.
And, it once here, thou mayest by its might
Evoke those famed heroic forms from Night:
The foremost who has e'er achieved such feat;
And when it is done, and thy task complete,
Forthwith, by sleights of magic, timely suited,
The incense smoke to gods will be transmuted.

FAUST.

And now what else?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thy spirit downward bend;
Sink with a stamp, and, stamping, reascend!

[FAUST *stamps, and sinks into the ground.*

Now, if the key its power with him should lack?
I'm curious to see if he comes back.

SCENE VI. — *A Hall Brilliantly Illuminated.*

EMPEROR, *Princes, Courtiers, moving up and down.*

CHAMBERLAIN (*to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

You still are owing us the phantom-play.
The Emperor grows impatient. Quick, I pray!

MARSHAL.

He asked about it not an hour ago.
You must not keep his Majesty waiting so.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

My comrade is upon this business gone;
He knows the way to set about it;
This very moment, never doubt it,
He's hard at work to push it on.
Shut in his room from vulgar gaze,
No ordinary sleights he tries,
For he that would such peerless beauty raise
Must use the highest art, the magic of the wise.

MARSHAL.

What arts he uses we don't care a pin —
Sir, sir, the Emperor wants you to begin.

BLONDE (*to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

One word, sir! My complexion now is clear,
But in the tiresome summer 'tis not so!
A hundred freckles then from ear to ear,
Quite horrid, tawny things, begin to show.
A remedy!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That such a blonde — 'tis hard! —
Should every May be spotted like the pard!
Take spawn of frogs, and tongues of toads new killed,
At the moon's fullest craftily distilled;
This lotion, when she wanes, apply: the spring
May come, you'll find the spots have taken wing.

BRUNETTE.

You're in request. Here's quite a mob advancing.
Oh, sir, a remedy! A frost-bit foot
Prevents me both from walking and from dancing;
I can't even curtsey gracefully, to boot.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Allow me, child, to press you with my foot!

BRUNETTE.

That's very well 'twixt lovers in their sports.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A vast deal more a tread from me imports.
Like draws to like, as web combines with woof,
Thus foot heals foot, limb limb. Come close! And, mind!
You need not think of answering in kind.

BRUNETTE.

Oh! oh! It burns! 'Twas like a horse's hoof,
It stamped so hard.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You of my cure have proof.
Now you may dance as much as e'er you please,
And your swain's foot beneath the table squeeze.

LADY (*pushing forward*).

Make way for me! Too heavy are my woes.
My inmost heart is racked by maddening throes!
He lived but in my looks till yesterday,
Now he woos her, and turns from me away.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis very sad! But I will set you right.
Up to his side you must contrive to steal.
This charcoal take, and draw it, as you may,
Across his sleeves, cloak, shoulder, and the wight
Shall sweet remorse within his bosom feel.
Then swallow off the charcoal — but no sips
Of water or of wine must cross your lips —
And at your door he sighs this very night.

LADY.

It is not poison?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*offended*).

Honour where 'tis due!
For such charcoal you must go many a mile.
'Twas gathered from a certain funeral pile,
Of which we raked the ashes through and through.

PAGE.

I'm mad in love; they say, I'm not full-grown.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

This sort of thing how am I to endure?
[*To the* PAGE.
The very young ones you must let alone.
You'll find admirers 'mong the more mature.
[*Others press round him.*

Still others coming! Here's a fine to-do!
I must resort to truth, to help me through.
The worst of helps! But no escape I see.
O Mothers, Mothers! set but Faustus free!
[*Looks round.*
Already they are lighting up the hall.
The whole Court is upon the move; and all
The motley stream in graceful order pours
Through far arcades and lengthened corridors.
Now to the old baronial hall they throng,
Scarce holds them all, wide though it be and long.
Its spacious walls are hung with tapestries rich.
And armour old on bracket and in niche.
No need of magic here, or spell, I wis:
Ghosts of themselves must haunt a place like this.

Scene VII. — *Baronial Hall Dimly Illuminated.*

The Emperor *and Court assembled.*

HERALD.

My old vocation, to announce the play,
Is by strange ghostly influence much perplexed;
I can't pretend to make things out, or say,
In such a ravelled business, what comes next.
There stand the couches ready, chairs and all,
The Emperor seated right before the wall;
Upon the tapestry he can behold
At ease the fights of the great times of old.
Round him are lords and gentlefolks reclined,
While common benches throng the space behind;
The lover, too, though ghosts are hovering near,
Has found a pleasant seat beside his dear;
And so, as all are comfortably placed,
The phantoms may appear with all convenient haste!
[*Trumpets.*

ASTROLOGER.

Now to begin the business of the play!
Our liege lord so commands. Ye walls, give way!
The spell and magic work to our desire,
The tapestry fades as 'twere devoured by fire;
The walls divide, and, as they backwards bend,
A stage and ample theatre disclose,
Where we shall be regaled with mystic shows;
And I to the proscenium ascend.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*popping up from the prompter's box*).

My skill, I trust, all here will duly prize;
The devil's rhetoric all in prompting lies.
[*To the* ASTROLOGER.
Thou, who the courses of the stars canst tell,
My whispers wilt interpret passing well.

ASTROLOGER.

By magic sleight, behold before your eyes
In massive bulk an ancient temple rise!
Like Atlas, who erewhile the heavens upbore,
Stand pillars ranged in rows, a goodly store;
Lightly they hold the rocky load in air,
Two shafts like these a structure vast could bear.

ARCHITECT.

That's your antique! I don't admire the style.
'Tis a great, clumsy, overweighted pile.
The rude's called noble, and the unwieldy grand;
Give me small shafts that far in air expand.
The pointed style exalts the soul, and nought
With such instructive influence is fraught.

ASTROLOGER.

The hours the stars concede accept with awe;
Be reason chained by the magician's saw;
But keep your fancy's wing unfettered still,
To roam with noble daring where it will.
Look with your eyes at what you long to see;
It is impossible, and cannot be,
And therefore merits your credulity.

[FAUST *rises at the other side of the proscenium.*

In priestly robes, and wreathed, a wondrous man,
Who now completes what boldly he began!
A tripod rises with him from the ground,
I scent the incense shed its fumes around;
See, he prepares the noble work to bless,
And for our pageant here ensure success!

FAUST (*in a majestic style*).

In your name, Mothers, yours, who have your throne
In the Infinite, and evermore alone,
Yet in communion dwell! The forms of life
Float round you, lifeless, yet with motion rife.
What once has been, in seeming as of yore,
Flits there, for 'twill exist for evermore;
And ye apportion them, ye powers of might,
'Twixt the day's canopy and the vault of night;
Some upon life's glad stream are borne away,
While others bend to the bold wizard's sway,
Who doth to you with hand profuse unfold
What marvels each is yearning to behold!

ASTROLOGER.

Scarce on the dish the golden key he lays,
When the air thickens to a dusky haze;
It coils and curls, now spreads, like clouds, about,
Contracts, expands, divides, shifts in and out.

Phantoms of power, be sure, are stirring there!
Hark! as they move, what music in the air!
With a weird charm the tones aërial thrill,
From every cloud soft melodies distil,
Each pillared shaft, the very triglyph rings,
Yea, I could swear that all the temple sings.
The mists subside, and from the filmy air
Comes graceful forth a youth surpassing fair.
[PARIS *appears.*
Mute let me be; what need his name to show?
Paris the Fair, who, who could fail to know?

FIRST LADY.

What youthful fire! What bloom upon his brow!

SECOND LADY.

As fresh and juicy as a peach, I vow!

THIRD LADY.

The finely chiselled, sweetly pouting lip!

FOURTH LADY.

At such a chalice you were fain to sip?

FIFTH LADY.

Handsome, no doubt, but not a noble face!

SIXTH LADY.

He's well enough, but sadly wanting grace.

FIRST KNIGHT.

The shepherd boy, and nothing more, 'tis plain;
Of prince and courtly breeding not a grain.

SECOND KNIGHT.

The lad's half naked, still he has his charms;
To judge, though, we must see him clad in arms.

FIRST LADY.

He sits him down with such a gentle grace.

FIRST KNIGHT.

Were not his breast a dainty resting-place?

ANOTHER LADY.

He bends his arm so prettily o'er his head.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Oh, shocking! Fie! Where was the fellow bred?

FIRST LADY.

You men always find out defective points.

CHAMBERLAIN.

What! In the Emperor's presence, stretch his joints?

FIRST LADY.

It's in the play. He thinks himself alone.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Even in a play good manners should be shown.

FIRST LADY.

Sweet youth! Soft slumber steals his senses o'er.

CHAMBERLAIN.

'Tis perfect! To the life! Is that a snore?

YOUNG LADY (*in raptures*).

What perfume's this, that, with the incense mingling.
Right to the centre of my heart goes tingling?

OLDER LADY.

A breath steals deep into your soul, forsooth!
It comes from him.

OLDEST LADY.

It is the bloom of youth,
A rare ambrosia, bred within the boy,
Which sheds around an atmosphere of joy.

[HELENA *advances*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Soh! such she was! Yet I am fancy-free.
She's pretty, hum! but not the style for me.

ASTROLOGER.

My task is ended. Frankly I avow
What well I feel, my task is ended now.
She comes, the ideal Fair, and though a tongue
Of fire were mine, of yore her charms were sung.
Who sees her, thenceforth is her slave confessed,
Who should possess her were too highly blessed.

FAUST.

Have I still eyes? I see, in trancèd thought,
Fair Beauty's fountain welling like a sea.
My voyage dread a glorious gain hath brought;
How blank, how dreary was the world to me!
And since my priesthood what hath it become?
Fleeting no more, nor void and wearisome!
May palsy's blight my every sense benumb,

If e'er I long for other love than thine!
The gracious form for which of old I panted,
Which in the magic glass my soul enchanted,
Was but a phantom of thy charms divine!
For thee, for thee, I would expend my whole
Pent passion's force, my energies of soul,
The love, devotion, madness of my heart!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be calm, be calm, and don't forget your part!

ELDERLY LADY.

Tall, well-proportioned, but her head's too small.

YOUNG LADY.

Look at her foot! that's clumsiest of all!

DIPLOMATIST.

Princesses just like this I've seen and know,
Methinks she's beautiful from top to toe!

COURTIER.

Now to the sleeper softly doth she glide.

FIRST LADY.

He young and pure — she's hideous by his side!

POET.

Her beauty seems to bathe his form in light.

SECOND LADY.

Endymion and Luna, pictured quite.

POET.

Yes! As from heaven she comes, the goddess pale,
O'er him she bends, his breathing to inhale;
O happy boy! A kiss! Oh, bliss untold!

DUENNA.

Before us all! 'Tis really too bold!

FAUST.

Oh! dreadful boon for one so young!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be still!
Let the fair phantom do whate'er it will!

COURTIER.

She glides away on tiptoe; does he wake?

FIRST LADY.

She looks behind; I thought she would, the snake!

COURTIER.

He starts! He's lost in wonder and amaze!

FIRST LADY.

No wonder 'tis to her, that fills her gaze!

COURTIER.

She turns to greet him with enchanting grace.

FIRST LADY.

She teaches him his lesson, what and how.
All men are stupid dolts in such a case.
He thinks, no doubt, she never loved till now.

KNIGHT.

She's perfect! So majestic, form and face.

FIRST LADY.

The wanton minx! Her conduct's a disgrace!

PAGE.

I would give worlds to occupy his place!

COURTIER.

In such a coil who'd not be netted fast?

FIRST LADY.

The jewel through so many hands has passed,
'Tis grown a trifle shabby in the setting.

ANOTHER LADY.

What wonder, after these ten years of fretting?

KNIGHT.

Each to his taste! But, have it if I might,
This lovely ruin would content me quite.

LITERATUS.

I see her plainly, yet I don't feel clear
That we have got the real Helen here.
Our eyes are apt to carry us astray;
To trust to what is written is my way.
There, then, I read, that she enchanted all
Troy's graybeards as she stood upon the wall;
And that is just, methinks, what here I see:
I am not young, and she enchanteth me.

ASTROLOGER.

A boy no more, he clasps her with a bound!
In vain she strives his ecstasy to school.
With stalwart arm he lifts her from the ground,
And now he bears her off.

FAUST.

Audacious fool!
Thou darest? What? Not hear me? Hold, I say!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

It is yourself who make this phantom play!

ASTROLOGER.

A word, one only! After this, we may
This pageant call — "The Rape of Helena."

FAUST.

The Rape! Do I then count for nothing here?
This key, do I not hold it in my hand?
It was my guide through the wide ocean drear
Of the dread Solitudes to solid land.
Here is firm footing! here Realities!
Here spirit may with spirits cope at ease,
And give the mighty phantom-world command.
And she who dwelt afar in grace divine,
How can she e'er be nearer to my hand?
I'll rescue her, then is she doubly mine.
The venture shall be made. Ye Mothers! ye
Must compass it! I charge ye, aid me! He,
Who her unmatched perfection once has known,
Must die, or win and wear it for his own.

ASTROLOGER.

Hold, Faustus, hold! He clasps her in his arm.
A cloudy trouble gathers o'er her form.
The key, he points it to the youth, and lo!
He touches him. We're all undone. Woe, woe!
[*Explosion.* FAUST *is dashed to the ground. The phantoms melt into air.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*takes* FAUST *upon his shoulders*).

You've caught it now! With fools his lot to cast,
To trouble brings the devil's self at last!
[*Darkness. Tumult.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A highly arched, narrow Gothic Chamber, formerly* FAUST'S; *unaltered.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*stepping out from behind a curtain. As he lifts it up and looks back,* FAUST *is seen stretched out upon an old-fashioned bed*).

Lie there, poor wretch! Yours is a crisis
Will last you for awhile, be sure!
The man whom Helen paralyses
Takes many a long day to cure. [*Looks round.*
Where'er I look, amid the glimmer,
There's nothing changed the very least.
The stained-glass panes, methinks, are rather dimmer,
The cobwebs round the room somewhat increased.
The ink's dried up; the paper yellow. There
Stands everything just where it did — yes, all!
There lies the very pen, too, I declare,
Faust to the devil signed himself withal.
And of his blood a tiny droplet still

Lingers within the hollow of the quill.
The very greatest of collectors might
In so unique a specimen delight.
Ha! On the old hook, too, the old furred cloak!
Of the old time it 'minds me, when, in joke,
Of solemn saws I gave the boy his fill,
At which the youth, perhaps, is mumbling still.
Warm, cosy robe, I feel as then,
And long to get inside of you,
And play the teacher once again,
As everybody thinks he's fit to do.
How to accomplish it your scholars know;
The devil lost the trick long, long ago.

[*Takes down the furred pelisse; crickets, moths, and chafers fly out from it.*

CHORUS OF INSECTS.

We welcome thy coming,
Old patron and friend;
With buzz and with humming
On thee we attend.
Singly, in silence,
Thou plantedst us here,
Skipping by thousands,
Behold, we appear!
The rogue in the bosom
Hides close in his lair;
Our fur-bed we gladly
Forsake for the air.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis quite a treat to hear these young fry cheep!
Let one but sow, in time he's sure to reap.
Again I shake the old tag-rag, and out
The creatures fly and flutter all about.

Up and away! In nooks on every side,
My little darlings, quickly hide.
In yon old boxes, chests, and bins,
Here in these yellow parchment skins,
In dusty pots, retorts, and bowls,
In yonder skulls' grim eyelet-holes.
Enjoy yourselves you surely must,
Among such maggots, dirt, and dust.
[*Slips into the pelisse.*
Come! and once more my back array!
I'm Principal again to-day:
But what avails to bear the name!
Where are the people, to admit my claim?
[*Pulls the bell, which emits a shrill, penetrating sound, at which the halls shake and the doors burst open.*

FAMULUS (*stumbling along the dark passage*).

What a clamour! what a quaking!
Walls and staircase rocking, shaking!
Ugh! the lightning, how it flashes
Through the coloured window-sashes!
From the ceiling, fast and faster,
Rattle stucco, lath, and plaster;
And, by wizard cantrip parted,
From the doors the bolts have started!
Yonder — horrors ne'er will cease! —
A giant in Faust's old pelisse!
He so stares and nods at me,
I shall drop down presently.
Shall I fly, or shall I stay?
I'm undone! Oh! well-a-day!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come hither, friend! Your name is Nicodemus.

FAMULUS.

Most worthy sir, that is my name. Oremus!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Some other time!

FAMULUS.

You know me, it appears!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Right well! A student still, though up in years!
Well, well, the learnedest, my moss-grown friend,
Can't choose but go on studying to the end.
A card-house so he builds him, small and neat;
But not even greatest minds their house complete.
Your master, though, he has indeed a name;
Who has not heard of Dr. Wagner's fame?
Wagner, the learned world's acknowledged head,
Which, but for him, indeed, might go to bed!
Daily from him new flashes burst
Of wisdom, science, and of knowledge,
And pupils, in and out of college,
For pure omniscience athirst,
In crowds surround this wondrous teacher.
He is your only brilliant preacher;
He like Saint Peter wields the keys,
And opens Hell's or Heaven's gates at his ease.
All other doctors' fame has faded
Before the brilliancy of his;
Even Faustus' name is overshaded;
The great inventor he, he only, is.

FAMULUS.

Fair sir, forgive me, if I may
Your dictum venture to gainsay;

Trust me, 'tis quite the other way.
The doctor would such praises spurn,
For he is modest to a flaw;
To Faustus he looks up with awe,
And may indeed be said to burn
For that distinguished man's return,
Whose absence, ever since he went,
Has caused him sore bewilderment.
This room, and everything that's in it,
Awaits its former master, just
As when he left it, even the dust.
I scarcely dare set foot within it.
What must the astral hour be — what?
The walls, methinks, have somehow parted,
The doorposts sprung, the ringbolts started,
Else in here you had never got.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, then, your master, where is he?
Bring me to him, or him to me.

FAMULUS.

His order's strict, to let none enter;
I scarcely know if I may venture.
On his stupendous task intent,
For months on months he has been pent
Within his room, in strict seclusion,
And will not brook the least intrusion.
The meekest of all learned men,
He looks like demon in his den,
Begrimed from ears to nose, his eyes
With blowing up the furnace red;
So day and night his tongs he plies,
And never thinks to go to bed.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Refuse to me admittance? Why,
The very man his ends to forward, I.

[*Exit* FAMULUS. MEPHISTOPHELES *sits down with a very solemn air.*

Scarce seated at my post, when — hark! oh, rare!
A visitor comes clattering up the stair;
But this time he is of the latest school;
Not to be bound by dogma or by rule.

BACCALAUREUS (*swaggering along the passage*).

Gate and doors wide open cast!
Good! So we may hope at last
That the living man no more
Grubs in dust, as heretofore,
Like a dead man — moping, sighing,
And, though living, truly dying.

This old fabric, roof and wall,
Bends and totters to its fall;
Scarce if soon we do not make us,
Crash and wreck will overtake us;
I, though not a man to flinch,
Go no farther, not an inch.

Was it not here? It was, I know,
That I, so many years ago,
A freshman came, in deep concern,
And full of foolish fears, to learn;
And in these graybeards did confide,
By their cold morsels edified.
Out of their musty volumes old
All sorts of lies they did unfold;
Believing not the things they knew,
Wasting their own lives, and mine too.

How? In yon cell there's one, I'm sure,
Still sitting in the clear-obscure!

How odd! Yes, in the very gown,
Turned up with fur of dingy brown!
In look or garb no sort of change!
Just as I left him. This is strange!
Then with an awe profound I scanned him,
Because I did not understand him;
To-day he'll find I'm up to trap.
Here goes! So now look out, old chap!
[*To* MEPHISTOPHELES.
Old gentleman, if Lethe's muddy tide
Have not o'erflowed your bald skew-dropping pate,
Here an old scholar see with grateful pride,
From academic thrall emancipate.
You are the same as then in every feature,
But I am quite another creature.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'm glad you've answered to my bell!
Even then your merits I could see;
As in the chrysalis one can foretell
The brilliant butterfly to be.
In collar laced, and curls well dressed,
You then felt quite a childish zest.
You never wore a pigtail, eh?
A crop, I see, you wear to-day.
You have a bold and dashing air,
Pray, don't too hard upon me bear!

BACCALAUREUS.

Old gentleman, this place may be the same,
But things have not been at a stop,
So your ambiguous phrases drop:
We're fly to all that sort of game.

You once could trot the simple youth;
It needed no great skill, to do
What now would puzzle more than you.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

If to the young one speaks unvarnished truth,
Their yellow beaks the precious food eschew;
But when, in course of time and tide,
They've learned it dearly through their hide,
They fancy, then, they found it out at once,
And so exclaim, "Our master was a dunce!"

BACCALAUREUS.

A knave, perhaps! For which of them has grace
To speak the plain truth plumply to our face?
They treat us like good children — here caress,
There threaten, letting out now more, now less.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

There is a time to learn; but, by your speech,
You are, I see, yourself prepared to teach.
Through many moons, and suns some few,
Profound experience, doubtless, has been gained by you.

BACCALAUREUS.

Experience! Psha! Mere dust and scum!
Mind, mind's the thing! Mind free and growing!
Of what man's always known the sum
Is not, confess it, worth the knowing.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*after a pause*).

I've long surmised I was a fool. Alas!
It strikes me now I am an utter ass.

BACCALAUREUS.

Delightful! There's some reason in you yet!
The first old man of sense I ever met!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I sought for hidden golden store, and lit
On merest cinder-rubbish everywhere.

BACCALAUREUS.

Your bald old pate is not, you'd best admit,
Worth more than yonder hollow skulls up there.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*good-humouredly*).

How rude you are, you're not aware, friend, quite.

BACCALAUREUS.

In German one must lie, to be polite.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*who has been throughout the dialogue rolling his chair nearer the proscenium — to the pit*).

I'm choked up here! Nor air nor light I've got.
You'll find me quarters 'mongst you, will you not?

BACCALAUREUS.

It's quite preposterous, that men will try
To cut a figure when their day's gone by.
Man's life lives in his blood; and where, forsooth,
Does blood so course and pulsate as in youth?
That's the true thing, with glow and vigour rife,
Which out of its own life creates new life.
There all is stir, there something's done and sped;
The weak fall out, the stalwart go ahead.
Whilst we have made one-half the world our own,
What have you done? Why, napped and mused alone,

Dreamed, pondered, planned, still planned, and that is all!
Old age a shivering ague is — no more! —
Of whims and frosty fancies bred;
When once his thirtieth year is o'er,
A man is just as good as dead.
'Twere best yourself betimes to slay.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The Devil here has nothing more to say.

BACCALAUREUS.

Save through my will, no Devil can exist.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

The Devil, though, some day your neck shall twist.

BACCALAUREUS.

This is youth's noblest calling and most fit!
The world was not, till I created it.
Out of the ocean I evoked the sun,
With me the moon began its course to run,
To light my path the day its splendour wore,
For me the earth her flowers and verdure bore.
At my command, on yonder primal night,
Did all the stars pour forth their glorious light.
Who but myself for you deliverance wrought
From the harsh fetters of pedantic thought?
I with free soul, ecstatical and bright,
Walk in the radiance of my inward light,
With fearless step and joy-illumined mind.
Before me brightness, darkness far behind. [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, go in pride, original, thy ways!
Insight would make thee melancholy:

What thought of wisdom or of folly
Has not been often thought in bygone days?
Yet in good time all will come safely round —
A few more years, this folly will have passed;
Even where the must ferments beyond all bound,
It yields a wine of some kind at the last.
[*To the younger occupants of the pit, who do not applaud.*
You to my words are deaf and cold.
Well, well! Good boys like you in time will mend 'em.
Reflect! the Devil, he is old;
Then grow you old, to comprehend him!

SCENE II. — *Laboratory, after the fashion of the middle ages; a quantity of useless apparatus, for fantastic purposes.*

WAGNER (*at the furnace*).

The bell rings; at its clangour drear
The mouldy walls with horror thrill;
This dread suspense of hope and fear
Must soon be solved, for good or ill.
Joy, joy! The gloom begins to clear!
Now is the phial's core below
As with a living coal aglow;
Yea, like a fine carbuncle, mark,
It flashes lightnings through the dark!
And now a light, pellucid, white!
Oh, let me, let me fail no more!
Great heavens! a rustling at the door?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*entering*).

Pray, don't alarm yourself! all's right.

WAGNER (*anxiously*).

Welcome! The stars my purpose aid!
[*In a low voice.*
But not a word. Breathe lightly, for a grand
Conception's consummation is at hand.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*in a whisper*).

What is afoot?

WAGNER (*also in a whisper*).

A man is being made.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A man! What pair of amorous tools
In the alembic there are sweating?

WAGNER.

Nay, heaven forfend! 'Tis only fit for fools,
That ancient method of begetting.
The tender point, which was life's source,
That subtle, springing, inward force,
Which, to impress its image bent,
Did something take, and something lent,
And to its ends essayed to win
Both what was foreign, what akin,
Is now from its high honours thrust.
If brutes this way still sate their lust,
Man, with his mighty gifts, henceforth, I wis,
Must have a source more high, more pure than this.
[*Turns to the furnace.*
It flashes! Look! My hopes were not unfounded.
I knew, and now the proof behold,
That when, from substance hundredfold,
From every source and quarter singled,

And all — for there's the art, I hold —
In suitable proportion mingled,
Man's substance we had thus compounded,
And in alembic then confounded,
In proper combination, we
The work in silence perfected should see.
[*Again turns to the furnace.*
Yes, yes! Behold! the mass grows clearer.
The demonstration nearer, nearer!
What men call Nature's mystery, we dare
By mind to probe and analyse,
And what she organised whilere,
We now contrive to crystallise.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

He that lives long learns much, as time goes by;
The world can nothing new before him set.
Already in my early travels I
Of mortals crystallised not few have met.

WAGNER (*who has meanwhile been watching the phial intently*).

It flashes, mounts, the atoms blend!
One moment, and we reach the end!
A grand design mere madness seems at first;
But in the end with us will be the laughter,
And thus a brain, which living thought has nursed,
Shall breed a living thinker too, hereafter.
[*Contemplates the phial with rapture.*
The glass rings piercingly and sweet.
It clouds, it clears! All, all, as it should be!
Settling into proportion meet,
A comely mannikin I see.
More can the world or can I wish for? No!
The mystery lies unveiled within our reach;

Just mark that sound, and you will find it grow
To perfect voice, to most articulate speech.

HOMUNCULUS (*in the phial, to* WAGNER).

How goes it, daddie mine! It was no jest.
Come, press me very gently to your breast.
But not too hard, else will the crystal shatter.
Remember, 'tis the law of matter,
That all the universe doth scarce suffice
For Nature's procreations grand,
While things produced by Art's device
A bounded space and well enclosed demand.
[*To* MEPHISTOPHELES.
Ha, rogue! That's you, sir kinsman, is it?
Thanks, thanks! Most aptly have you timed your visit.
Rare chance for us that brought you here! And I,
Whilst I exist, my task must briskly ply.
I long to tackle to my work, and you
Are just the man to show me what to do.

WAGNER.

One word, just one, to screen my credit, pray,
And save my reputation many a slight!
With problems I am pelted every day,
By young and old, which baffle me outright.
For instance, nobody can comprehend
How body and soul so exquisitely blend,
Sticking as close as though they ne'er would part,
Yet every day embroiled in conflict tart.
Then —

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Stop! Ask rather, how it comes about
That man and wife so constantly fall out?

Such problems, friend, you never will see through.
The little one wants work; here's work to do.

HOMUNCULUS.

What's to be done?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*pointing to a side-door*).

Yonder thy gifts employ!

WAGNER (*still gazing into the phial*).

In sooth, thou art a darling of a boy!

[*The side-door opens.* FAUST *is seen lying upon the couch.*

HOMUNCULUS (*amazed*).

Strange!

[*The phial bounds out of* WAGNER'S *hands, hovers over* FAUST, *and sheds a light upon him.*

What a gorgeous garniture of dream!
Deep in the umbrage of a wood, a stream
Lucent as crystal — women, oh, how fair!
Their limbs unrobing in the sunlit air;
And one, who o'er them all asserts her place,
Supreme in beauty, and supreme in grace,
Sprung of heroic, yea, Olympian race!
She dips her foot in the transparent tide,
Cooling the glow of her majestic frame
In waves that leap and sparkle up her side,
In loving dalliance with the fragrant flame.
But hark! a rushing as of wings in flight!
What plash and plunging mar the mirror bright!
Her maidens fly in terror: she, their queen,
Gazes around her, smiling and serene,
And with a thrill of pride and pleasure sees
The foremost swan come fondling to her knees,
Importunate, yet gentle. Now, at ease,

With the coy beauty he disports and plays.
But lo! at once a mist begins to rise,
And veils in an impenetrable haze
The loveliest of all visions from my eyes.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A very exquisite romance, I vow;
Small though thou art, a mighty phantast thou.
I can see nothing.

HOMUNCULUS.

I believe it. How
Should you, a creature of the northern clime,
Bred 'mid the frippery of priests and knights,
Have your eyes open to such glorious sights?
You never are at home but where
Darkness and gloom infect the air. [*Looking round.*
Gray stone walls, moss-grown, ugly, groins,
High-pointed arches, volutes, coigns!
If here he wake, 'twill ruin all,
Dead on the spot he'd surely fall!
Swans, naked beauties, woodland, stream,
These made up his prophetic dream.
How should he ever reconcile
Himself to breathe in den so vile?
Though little caring where I be,
I find it rather much for me.
So hence with him!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Your wish shall be obeyed.

HOMUNCULUS.

Command the warrior to the fight,
To dance and roundel lead the maid,

And then their joy is at its height.
This is — ha, ha! the thought is bright —
The Classical Walpurgis Night.
The very thing to nurse his bent!
He'll there be in his element.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of such a think I never heard.

HOMUNCULUS.

Oh! good!
And was it probable you should?
You only know romantic spectres; but
The genuine spectre's of a classic cut.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In what direction shall we ride?
Antique companions, mind, I can't abide.

HOMUNCULUS.

Your pleasure-grounds north-westward, Satan, lie,
But south and eastward we to-night must hie.
O'er a broad flat doth fair Peneios wind,
By many an oozy bay, green woodlands through:
The mountain cliffs close in the plain behind,
And far up lies Pharsalus old and new.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Out and away! No longer let me hear
Of slaves and tyrants waging conflict drear!
They bore me; for one war is scarcely done,
When out of hand another is begun;
And not a man of them can see that they
Only the game of Asmodeus play.

For Freedom's rights they battle, that's the cry;
Slaves murder slaves, were nearer truth, say I.

HOMUNCULUS.

Oh, to their strife and wrangling leave mankind.
Each must protect himself as best he can,
From boyhood up; so grows at last a man.
The cure for him (*pointing to* FAUST) is what we have to find.
If you've a panacea, prove it now;
If not, give way, and leave the task to me.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The bolts of heathendom, I must avow,
Defy my brocken spells to find the key.
These Greeks were never good for much. Yet stay!
They charm men's senses with external show.
Their sins look bright, and beautiful, and gay;
While ours seem always dreary, dull, and slow.
And now what else?

HOMUNCULUS.

You used not to be shy.
I think I've something I can tempt you by.
What say you to Thessalian witches, eh?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*kindling up*).

Thessalian witches? Good! A gentry these
I've been inquiring for this many a day.
I have a notion, though, that they
My taste will not exactly please, —
Night after night, at least, with them to stay.
But we shall see. Away!

HOMUNCULUS.

The cloak once more!
And in it wrap yon sleeping cavalier!
'Twill bear you both, as it has done before.
I go ahead, you by my light to steer.

WAGNER (*alarmed*).

And I?

HOMUNCULUS.

Why, you — stay here at home, and those
Researches most momentous close!
Turn your old parchments o'er and o'er, — collect
The elements of life, as they direct,
Then piece them warily; and, look ye now,
Consider well the WHAT, but more the HOW
I o'er a slice of earth the while will hie,
And should I find the dot upon the I,
Why, this your mighty enterprise will cap.
The prize is more than worth the effort — wealth,
Honour, renown, long life, unfailing health,
Knowledge withal, and virtue too, — mayhap.
Farewell!

WAGNER.

Farewell! My heart is sad and sore,
For much I fear I ne'er shall see thee more.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now for Peneios! My small friend,
I'm not ashamed to claim his aid. [*Ad spectatores.*
We in the long run all depend
Upon the creatures we have made.

CLASSICAL WALPURGIS NIGHT.

SCENE III. — *Pharsalian Fields — Darkness.*

ERICHTHO.

To this night's ghastly revel, as full oft before,
I hither come, Erichtho I, the sad of mien,
Yet not so loathly, as with calumny's gross tongue
The libellous poets paint me. They, in praise or blame
No stint nor measure know. The vale through all its length
Is white as with a sea of tents, all ashy gray,
An after-reflex of that awful, ghastly night.
How oft already has it been repeated! 'Twill
Be through all time repeated! Empire no one yields
To another; no, not even to him by whom 'twas won
By force, by force is swayed. For who, though powerless
To rule his inner self, is not intent to rule
His neighbour's will, at the proud dictates of his own?
But here a signal proof to bitter end was fought,
How power arrays itself against a mightier power;
Rends freedom's chaplet fair, with all its thousand flowers,
And stubborn laurels round the victor's brows entwines.
Here Magnus of the days of his first greatness dreamed.
There Cæsar watched the wavering balance shake.
Here shall they grapple! Well the world the victor knows.
With tongues of ruddy flame the watch-fires glow, the ground
A semblance of the blood, that dyed it erst, exhales,
And, by the night's most strange and weird-like sheen allured,

The beings of Hellenic legend 'gin to throng.
The fabled forms of ancient days unstably flit
Around the fires, or sit in circles at their ease.
The moon, though only half her orb, resplendent, clear,
Climbs up the sky, and fills the vale with mellow light.
The phantom tents fade out, and bluely burn the fires.
But lo! what meteor strange comes sailing through the air!
Itself illumed, a ball corporeal it illumes.
I scent life near at hand. Destructive as I am
To all that lives, 'twill not beseem me to remain;
'Twould bring me ill repute, advantage none at all.
Now it descends to earth! 'Tis best that I retire.

[*Withdraws.*

The Aerial Travellers above.

HOMUNCULUS.

Hover, hover, in the air,
O'er these flames and phantoms dreary;
Down within the valley there,
Things look spectral, wild, and eerie.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

As a-north, through casements old
Ghastly shapes and horrors rare,
Hideous ghosts I now behold;
Here I'll be at home, as there!

HOMUNCULUS.

See yon figure, long and gaunt,
Swift away before us gliding!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

She looks troubled, to her haunt
Through the air to see us sliding.

HOMUNCULUS.

Let her go! Set down thy freight,
That paladin of dreams unstable,
And life will come back to him straight;
He seeks it in the realm of fable.

FAUST (*as he touches the ground*).

Where is she?

HOMUNCULUS.

Cannot say, good sir;
But here you may get news of her.
From fire to fire till dawn do you
Unceasingly your quest pursue.
Should anything his courage daunt,
Who dared invade The Mothers' haunt?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I, too, have here a part to play;
And there can be no better way
Than for us each to seek his own
Adventures 'mongst these fires alone.
And thou, small friend, to reunite us,
Shalt ring, and with thy radiance light us.

HOMUNCULUS.

Thus shall I blaze, thus ring for you!
[*The glass booms and flashes vehemently.*
Now, haste away to marvels new!

FAUST (*alone*).

Where is she? Wherefore now inquire?
If this were not the land that bore her,
These not the waves that paddled o'er her,
This is, at least, the air that did her speech inspire.

Here! here in Greece! Here, by a marvel swept,
I knew at once the soil on which I stood:
A spirit fired my life-blood as I slept;
Antæus-like I feel a giant's mood,
And though my path be thronged with visions dire,
I will explore this labyrinth of fire. [*Goes off.*

Scene IV. — *On the Upper Peneios.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*peering about*).

As in and out among these flames I flirt,
I'm quite put out, for almost all I view
Is naked, only here and there a shirt;
The Sphinxes lost to shame, the Griffins too,
And all those long-tressed things of wingèd kind,
Bare to the eye in front, and bare behind.
We relish rarely what is gross and free,
But, really, the antique's too lively even for me.
On it we must our modern views impress,
And clothe it in the latest style of dress.
A hideous crew! Yet must I not neglect
To greet them, as a stranger, with respect.
Hail, lovely females — hail, ye grizzled sages!

GRIFFIN (*snarling*).

Not grizzled! Griffins! No one likes to hear
Himself called grizzled. Every word betrays
Its lineage by the sound which it conveys.
Gray, grewsome, grizzled, graves, grim, grizzly, all
Of the same root etymological,
Grate on our ears.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And yet it cannot be,
That in the Griffin you dislike the Gri?

GRIFFIN.

Of course not! Kindred as it is with what,
If sometimes censured, oftener praise has got:
A man should grasp at Beauty, Empire, Gold,
Fortune the grasping favours and the bold.

ANTS (*of colossal size*).

You speak of gold; we had collected heaps,
And stored them close in caves and rocky keeps;
The Arimaspians, they found out the place,
Hid all away, and mock us to our face.

GRIFFIN.

We'll force them to acknowledge where it lies.

ARIMASPIAN.

Not on this night of jubilee.
Until to-morrow all are free.
This time we're certain of our prize.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*has stationed himself between the Sphinxes*).

Quite comfortable here I feel,
For you I comprehend and know.

SPHINX.

Then what our spirit-tones reveal
Clothe thou with shape, if this be so.
That we may know thee, let thy name be told.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The names men call me by are manifold.
Say, are there any Britons here?

They're always roaming far and near,
To spy out battle-fields, old crumbling walls,
Drear spots of classic fame, rocks, waterfalls.
Meet goal were this for them! And they,
If here, would testify, in the old play
They talked of me as Old Iniquity.

SPHINX.

And why?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That's just what puzzles me.

SPHINX.

Perhaps! perhaps! Canst read the starry book?
What say'st thou to its aspect, then, to-night?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Star courses star, the shaven moon shines bright,
And I'm delighted with this cosy nook,
And warm me rarely 'gainst thy lion's skin.
To go up higher were a loss to win.
Come now, enigmas or charades propound.

SPHINX.

Propound thyself; enigma more profound
Than thou 'twere scarcely possible to start.
So, then, essay to fathom what thou art.
"What to the pious and the heedful,
Or wicked man alike is needful,
To that a butt, to try his foil on,
To this a chum, to folly to beguile on,
And every way a thing for Zeus to smile on?"

FIRST GRIFFIN (*snarling*).

I can't abide him.

SECOND GRIFFIN (*snarling more vehemently*).

What does he want here?

BOTH.

Such scum why should we suffer near?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You think, perhaps, my nails are not a match
For your sharp talons, should we come to scratch.
Try, then, just try!

SPHINX (*mildly*).

Remain, if you desire;
Ere long you will be anxious to retire.
At home you can do anything you please:
Here, if I err not, you are ill at ease.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Above, no daintier bit of flesh I know,
But, ugh! I shudder at the beast below.

SPHINX.

False churl, beware, or dearly shall ye rue:
These claws of ours are sharp and fell!
Lord of the shrunken hoof, no place for you
Our circle holds, and that ye know full well.
[*Sirens preludise above.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What birds are these on yonder bough,
Among the river-willows there?

SPHINX.

The best have fallen a prey, ere now,
To such sing-song, so thou beware!

SIRENS.

Ah, why wilt thou linger long
'Midst the wondrous, the unsightly?
Hark, we come, a chorus sprightly,
Carolling melodious song,
As beseems the siren throng!

SPHINX (*mocking them in the same melody*).

Force them to come down, for they
Hide among the leafy spray
Their long talons, hooked and hideous,
Which on thee will fall perfidious,
Shouldst thou listen to their lay.

SIRENS.

Hatred, envy, hence take wing!
We the purest pleasures bring,
Which beneath the welkin be.
Best of water, best of earth,
Shapes of beauty, shapes of mirth,
Shall combine to welcome thee.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These are the new vagaries fine,
Where note round note is made to twine
From throat or strings with curious art.
On me the caterwauling's lost;
It titillates my ears at most,
But fails to penetrate the heart.

SPHINX.

Speak not of heart! What heart hast thou?
A shrivelled leathern flask, I vow,
For face like thine were heart enow.

FAUST (*enters*).

How wondrous! yet how fine! Where'er I gaze,
Even in the loathly, grand impressive traits!
There's something tells me, this way fortune lies;
Where do they bear me, these calm earnest eyes?
[*Indicating the Sphinxes.*
Ha! Before such stood Œdipus of yore.
[*Indicating the Sirens.*
Even such Ulysses crouched in hempen cords before.
[*Indicating the Ants.*
By such, a priceless treasure was amassed.
[*Indicating the Griffins.*
By these 'twas guarded safely to the last.
With new-born life I feel my soul expand.
Grand are the forms, the recollections grand.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Time was, you would have banned these creatures here,
But now, it seems, to them you're well inclined;
For where a man is hunting for his dear,
Monsters themselves a ready welcome find.

FAUST (*to the Sphinxes*).

Ye female forms must answer me! Who e'er
Among you hath seen Helena the Fair?

SPHINX.

Not to her age did we pertain.
The last of us by Hercules was slain.
From Chiron thou mayst tidings gain.

He will be roaming hereabout to-night.
Much mayst thou hope, if thou canst stay his flight.

SIRENS.

Thou, too, shouldst not lack for glory. . . .
As Ulysses stayed beside us,
Neither mocked us, nor defied us,
Much he learned for after-story.
Come unto the bright green sea,
Come and dwell with us, and we,
All we know will tell to thee.

SPHINX.

Noble child of earth, away!
Heed not their delusive lay.
Let our counsels bind thee fast
As Ulysses to the mast.
Find great Chiron, he will show
All thy heart desires to know. [FAUST *retires.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*peevishly*).

What are these unsightly things?
How they croak and flap their wings!
Scarce visible, so swift they go,
And one by one, all in a row.
They would tire a sportsman, these.

SPHINX.

Like the wintry storm-blast flying,
Alcides' shafts almost defying,
These are the fleet Stymphalides;
Though in hoarsest croakings sent,
Yet their greeting's kindly meant:
With their vulture beaks, and feet
Webbed like geese, they fain would win

Footing here in our retreat,
As being to ourselves akin.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*scared*).

More monsters still among them hiss and play!

SPHINX.

These are the heads, — nay, dread no ill! —
Of the Lernean snake, that think they're something still,
Though from the trunk dissevered many a day.
But what's the matter with you, say?
You look uneasy, twist awry.
Where would you wish to go? Away!
You group, I see, has caught your eye.
Do not constrain yourself to stay.
Be gone to them! You'll stumble there
On many a visage passing fair.
They are the Lamiæ, wantons rare,
With smiling lips and foreheads bold,
Revel with satyrs fit to hold;
With them what may not Goatfoot dare?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You'll stay, then, here or hereabout,
That I again may find you out?

SPHINX.

Go, mingle with the revel rout!
Long has our native Egypt known
Our kith and kindred keep their throne
Thousands of years; we shall not weary soon.
Ours is no fickle fleeting state;
Moveless ourselves, we regulate
The periods of the sun and moon.

Before the Pyramids we sit:
The nations dree their doom before us —
War, peace, or deluge — and no whit
Of change or turning passes o'er us.

Scene V. — *On the Lower Peneios.*

PENEIOS (*surrounded by streams and Nymphs*).

Stir, ye sedges, swaying slowly;
Breathe, ye tangled rushes, lowly;
Wave, ye willows, softly sighing,
To the aspens' thrill replying,
'Midst the pauses of my dreams!
But a thund'rous murmur dread
Scares me from my slumb'rous bed
'Neath the ever-flowing streams.

FAUST (*advancing to the stream*).

Hear I rightly, then I ween
In behind the leafy screen
Of these woven boughs are noises,
Like the sound of human voices.
Yea, each wavelet seems to be
Brattling, prattling, merrily.

NYMPHS (*to* FAUST).

Lay thee down lowly,
Thy joy will be full!
Rest thy o'erwearied
Limbs in the cool.
The peace shall come o'er thee
That evermore flees thee;
We'll lisp, or we'll whisper,
Or murmur to please thee.

FAUST.

I wake indeed! I see them well,
These forms of grace unmatchable,
In beauty palpable to sight!
What transports strange my spirit seize!
Can these be dreams, or memories,
The shadows of an old delight?
The limpid waters, as they stray
Through bushes green, that gently sway
Above them, scarce a murmur make;
An hundred rills together meet
In one broad, clear, unruffled sheet
Of waters deep — a crystal lake:
Young female forms, plump, debonair,
That fill the eye with rapture, there
Are in the liquid mirror glassed!
In merry groups to bathe they come,
Some stoutly swim, wade shyly some,
Shout, splash in sportive fray at last.
Could these content, mine eye should find
Enjoyment here; but no, my mind
Looks farther, and with vision keen
Would pierce yon thick embowering roof
Of clustering leaves, whose tangled woof
Conceals the glory of their queen.

Oh, wonderful! Swans bright of hue,
From leaf-screened nooks swim into view
With slow majestic pace,
All side by side serenely steering,
Their neck and crest right proudly rearing,
As conscious of their grace.
Yet one that breasts the glassy tide,
Outstripping all, a statelier pride
And bearing seems to vaunt:

With pinions all blown proudly out,
He cleaves the waves that curl about,
And nears the sacred haunt.
The rest glide softly to and fro,
With feathers smooth and white as snow;
But lo! their crests in wrath they set,
And put to flight the fearful maids,
Who, seeking safety in the glades,
Their mistress-queen forget.

NYMPHS.

Sisters, sisters, lay your ear
To the shore's green brink, and say,
If, like me, the beats you hear
Of horses' hooves that come this way.
Much I marvel, who to-night
Message bears in stormy flight!

FAUST.

The earth rings with a hollow sound,
As from a flying courser's bound!
There, there, see there!
Should fate so rare
Be mine, then, then would all be well,
Oh, marvel without parallel!
A horseman on a snowy steed, —
High mettle in his looks I read, —
Comes trampling on and on to me.
I do not err — 'tis he, the son
Of Philyra, the far-famed one!
Stop, Chiron, stop! I'd speak with thee.

CHIRON.

How now? What wouldst thou?

FAUST.

Pause, I prithee.

CHIRON.

I may not rest.

FAUST.

Then take me with thee!

CHIRON.

Mount! And I then may question thee at will.
Whither wouldst go? Thou stand'st here on the banks —
Wouldst cross the stream? I'll take thee. Pausing still?

FAUST (*mounting*).

Where'er thou wilt — and win my endless thanks.
The great man thou, the teacher rich in glory,
Who reared a race of heroes high and bold,
Those gallant Argonauts renowned in story,
And all who made the poet's world of old.

CHIRON.

Best speak no more of that! E'en Pallas hath
Not always honour as a Mentor gained;
Men will be men, and hold their wayward path,
Do what we will, as though they'd ne'er been trained.

FAUST.

The leech who gives a name to every plant,
Knows every root, its virtue, and its haunt,
Has balm for every wound, and physic for each pain,
With mind and body's force here to my heart I strain.

CHIRON.

Were hero striken down, I still could find
All needful aid and skill his hurt requires,
But I my leechcraft long long since resigned
To simple-culling beldames and to friars.[1]

FAUST.

The truly great art thou, whose ear
His proper praise is loath to hear,
Who shrinks from view, and seems to be
But one of many great as he.

CHIRON.

And thou, methinks, hast flattering wile,
Both prince and people to beguile.

FAUST.

At least confess thou hast stood face to face
With all the best and greatest of thy time,
With noblest spirits vied in virtue's race,
And lived the strenuous life of demigods sublime.
Then tell me, 'midst these grand heroic forms,
Which of them all possessed the goodliest charms?

CHIRON.

In that brave Argonautic circle shone
Each hero with a lustre of his own,
And by the force that in his soul prevailed
Supplied the void wherein his comrades failed.

[1] "Well did poets feign Æsculapius and Circe, brother and sister, and both children of the sun; for in all times, in the opinion of the multitude, witches, old women, and impostors have had a competition with physicians. And commonly the most ignorant are the most confident in their undertakings, and will not stick to tell you what disease the gall of a dove is good to cure." — FULLER'S *Holy and Prophane State. The Good Physician.*

Ever where youth and manly grace held sway,
The Dioscuri bore the palm away.
Resolve and speed to act for others' ease
The glory was of the Boreades.
Far-seeing, wary, firm, in council wise,
So lorded Jason, dear to woman's eyes.
Then Orpheus, gentle, given to muse apart,
Whene'er he swept the lyre, subdued each heart.
Keen-sighted Lynceus, he, by shine and dark,
Steered on o'er rock and shoal the sacred bark.
The danger many share we scarcely fear,
And toil grows light, with others by to cheer.

FAUST.

But wilt thou tell me now of Hercules?

CHIRON.

Oh, woe! Awaken not sad memories!
Nor Mars, nor Phœbus had I viewed,
Nor Hermes, born of Maia's line,
When on a day before me stood
What all men worship as divine.
A monarch born was he, in all
Youth's noblest graces past compare!
And yet his elder brother's thrall,
And thrall of women passing fair.
Not earth shall yield his like again,
Nor Hebe to the gods present;
Men weave for him their lays in vain,
In vain the sculptured stone torment.

FAUST.

So then, not all the sculptor's cunning can
Embody charms so superhuman!

Thou'st told me of the finest man,
Now tell me of the finest woman.

CHIRON.

What! Woman's beauty to portray,
I deem it but a bootless task;
Too oft it is, alas the day!
An icy-chill and moveless mask.
But her alone can I account
As lovely, be she maid or wife,
From whom doth flow, as from a fount,
A stream of bright and gladsome life.
Self-blest is beauty, look who list,
Grace has a charm none may resist,
Like Helena, whom once I bore.

FAUST.

Whom once you bore?

CHIRON.

Ay, on my back.

FAUST.

Was I not crazed enough before,
But I must light on such a track?

CHIRON.

She twined her hand into my hair,
As thou dost now.

FAUST.

Oh, joy most rare!
My senses reel! Say how, I pray.
She only is my soul's desire!
Whence, whither didst thou bear her, say?

CHIRON.

Soon told is what you thus require!
The Dioscuri had — it happened then —
Freed their young sister from some thievish men,
Who, little used to yield, took heart of grace,
And, mad with fury, gave their victors chase.
On sped the fugitives, but the morass
Hard by Eleusis checked them as they flew;
The brothers, wading o'er, contrived to pass,
I caught her up, and, swimming, bore her through.
Then she leapt down, and, in a childlike vein,
Playing and fondling with my dripping mane,
Thanked me in tones so sweet, yet calm and sage.
Oh, what a charm she had! Young, yet the joy of age!

FAUST.

Scarce seven years old.

CHIRON.

The philologues, I see,
Self-mystified themselves, have cheated thee.
Your mythologic woman's of a kind
Unlike all other members of her sex;
Each poet paints her after his own mind,
And with his own peculiar fancies decks.
Never too young, nor ever old, her form
Wears at all times a soul-enkindling charm;
When young, she's ravished — old, she's courted still.
Enough! Time cannot bind the poet's will.

FAUST.

Then why by time should Helena be bound?
At Pheræ she was by Achilles found,
Beyond the verge of Time. Oh, rare delight,
To triumph where he loved, in fate's despite!

And should not I on this wild heart of mine
Bear back to life that perfect form divine;
That peer of gods, that soul of endless time,
As grand as gentle, winning as sublime?
Thou long ago, but I to-day have seen
That shape of light, and dignity serene,
Fair to the eye, as in her grace most rare,
And loved, desired, adored as she is fair!
Now am I bound her slave, sense, soul, and thought;
Come death, and welcome, if I win her not!

CHIRON.

Strange being! Men would call you rapturous,
We spirits simply mad, in doting thus.
But by good luck the fit has seized you here;
For 'tis my usage, once in every year,
To call on Manto, Esculapius' daughter,
Who doth in silent prayer her sire implore,
Even for the love and reverence which he taught her,
Some rays of light on leeches' minds to pour,
And turn them from their headlong course of slaughter
I love her most of all the Sibyl guild.
Not given to fancies she, nor fond pretence,
But meek and gentle, yet profoundly skilled,
Unwearied in a wise beneficence.
Stay some short space with her, and, trust me, she
With potent roots will cure thee utterly.

FAUST.

Cured? I will not be cured! My soul is strong!
It will not grovel with the vulgar throng.

CHIRON.

Slight not the virtues of the noble fount!
But see, we're at the place. Be quick, dismount!

FAUST.

Whither to land through the grim dark hast thou
Across the pebbly shallows brought me now?

CHIRON.

Here by Peneios and Olympus too,
Rome grappled Greece in fight, and overthrew
The mightiest empire e'er has known decay.
The burgher triumphs and the king gives way.
Look up and see, above thee, close at hand,
The eternal temple in the moonshine stand!

MANTO (*muttering in a dream*).

Hoof-beats there
Ring on the steps of the sacred stair!
Some demigods are nigh!

CHIRON.

Right! right! Arouse thee! Wake! 'Tis I, 'tis I!

MANTO (*awaking*).

Welcome! I see thou still art true.

CHIRON.

And still thy temple-home is standing, too.

MANTO.

Dost thou still wander, tiring never?

CHIRON.

Thou liv'st in calm contentment ever,
Whilst I go circling round the sphere.

MANTO.

Time circles me, I tarry here.
But he?

CHIRON.

This night of eldritch glee
Hath whirled him hitherward with me.
Helen hath set his brains a-spin —
Helen he is intent to win,
But weets not how he shall begin.
A patient he, of all men best,
Thine Esculapian skill to test.

MANTO.

Me do such spirits chiefly please
As crave impossibilities.
[CHIRON *is already far away.*

MANTO (*to* FAUST).

On, daring heart! Bliss shall be thine!
This dusky path conducts to Proserpine.
Deep in Olympus' caverned base sits she,
And waits forbidden greetings secretly.
I once sped Orpheus on this murky way —
Push on, be bold, and wiser heed display.
[*They descend.*

SCENE VI. — *On the Upper Peneios as before.*

SIRENS.

Plunge into Peneios! There,
Oh, what joy, as on we swim
And plash about, our songs to hymn
For these poor mortals all too fair!

Water is of health the spring!
Haste ye then, and, when we gain
The Ægean's azure main,
Rare shall be our revelling! [*Earthquake.*

All afoam the wave runs back,
Flows no longer in its track;
Quakes the ground, the waters shiver,
Bank and gravel smoke and quiver.
Let us fly! Come, sisters all,
Lest disaster worse befall!

Away, and let our pastime be
In bright ocean's Jubilee,
Where the billows, rippling o'er,
Break in sparkles on the shore;
Where Selene o'er our heads
Her serenest lustre spreads,
And, mirrored in the ocean blue,
Moistens all with holy dew.
There is gladsome life and free,
Earthquake here and agony.
Haste, then, hence, if ye be wise!
On this region horror lies.

SEISMOS (*growling and grumbling underground*).

One more thrust with might and main,
Set the shoulders to the strain,
So shall we the surface gain,
Where all must give way before us!

SPHINX.

What a tremor's here, what rumbling,
What a grewsome grating, grumbling,
What a reeling, quaking, ho!
Oscillation to and fro!

'Tis a most provoking pinch,
Yet shall we not move an inch,
Though all hell itself broke o'er us!

Now in wondrous wise a mound
Swells and rises from the ground.
'Tis that very old man hoar
Built up Delos' isle of yore,
Heaving it from ocean's deep,
Safe a teeming dame to keep.
Thrusting, squeezing, straining thew,
Stretching arms, and bending shoulders,
He, like Atlas to the view,
Heaves up earth and turf and boulders,
Sand and gravel, shale and clay,
Tranquil strata of our bay.
So a section up he rends,
Right across the vale extends.
Though waist-deep in earth still squatted,
The colossal Caryatid
Bears unmoved, without a groan,
A tremendous bulk of stone.
Nearer it shall not approach,
Nor upon our haunt encroach.

SEISMOS.

Alone, alone I did it! Truly
Men will this at last allow.
Had I not shaken it up so throughly,
This world, would it be fair as now?
How should yon mountain-ridges cleave
The gorgeous depths of ether blue,
Had I not thrust them forth, to weave
A beauty picturesque to view?
When, whilst my primal sires looked on —
Night and old Chaos — I my force displayed,

And, of the Titans the companion,
With Pelion, as at ball, and Ossa played,
Wildly we plied our youthful freaks,
Until, to crown them all, at last,
Like a twin cap two mountain-peaks
We on Parnassus madly cast,
Where now, for sport and joyance, meet
Apollo and the Muses' choir.
I even upheaved the glorious seat
Of Jove, and all his bolts of fire.
So now with stress stupendous I
Have struggled up from depths profound,
And for inhabitants I cry,
To spread new life and stir around.

SPHINX.

This for birth of primal eld
We assuredly had taken,
Had we not ourselves beheld
How it from the ground was shaken.
Still upward brake and forest spread,
And rocks on rocks still forward tread;
But not for things like these shall Sphinx retreat:
They shall not drive us from our sacred seat.

GRIFFINS.

Gold in specks and veins I spy
Gleam in fissures all about:
Let not such a prize slip by;
Emmets, up, and pick it out!

CHORUS OF ANTS.

Fast as the giant ones
Yonder upheave it,
Seize it, ye pliant ones,
And never leave it.

Quick! Every cranny in
Ranging and rifling;
None that there's any in
Can be too trifling.
Murkiest, shiniest,
Look ye explore it;
Each speck, the tiniest,
Seize it and store it.
Work away with a will,
Till it's all rolled out:
Move the hill how it will,
Do you get its gold out!

GRIFFIN.

Pile the gold up! Pile away!
We on it our claws will lay.
Be the treasure what it may,
Surest of all bolts are they!

PIGMIES.

We have found a footing here;
How, a puzzle is would task us.
That we've come, is very clear;
Whence we come, then, do not ask us!
Every country, where life glows,
Finds a master soon to guide it;
So no rock a fissure shows,
But a dwarf is straight beside it.
There his busy toil he plies,
Model spouse with model mate;
If 'twas so in Paradise,
That is more than I can state.
But we like this for a nest.
Bless the stars that hither sent us,
In the East as in the West
Mother Earth yields foison plenteous.

DACTYLS.

If she in a night these small
Imps did into being call,
Smaller still she will create,
And with kindred creatures mate.

THE OLDEST OF THE PIGMIES.

Hasten, and fit ye
Stoutly to quit ye.
Get to work quickly!
Strike your strokes thickly!
In force though they fail,
Let their swiftness prevail.
Peace still is with ye!
Up with the stithy,
Buckler and glaive
To forge for the brave.

And you, ye emmets, ho,
Swarming there to and fro,
Metals with swiftest speed
Fetch for our need!
Ye dactyls slumberless,
Tiny, but numberless,
Quick, from the brake
Fetch faggot and stake!
Pile the fire, heap it up,
Feed it, and keep it up,
Charcoal to make!

GENERALISSIMO.

With arrow and bow
Away! Hillio, ho!
Shoot me those herons
Down by the marsh there,

Clustering numberless,
Croaking so harsh there!
Quick, let me see them
Slain altogether!
So shall we prank it
In helmet and feather!

ANTS AND DACTYLS.

Iron we bring them —
Ah, who is to save us? —
Which into fetters
They forge to enslave us.
Not yet is the hour come
To rise up defiant;
Then be to your tyrants
Submissive and pliant.

THE CRANES OF IBYCUS.

Shrieks of murder, dying groans,
Wings that flutter in dismay,
Oh, what outcry and what moans
To our peaks here pierce their way!
They are all already slain,
All the lake their blood doth stain.
Wanton passion for display
Shore the heron's plumes away.
See it on the helmet wave
Of each bow-legged pot-bellied knave!
Ye companions of our host,
That in troops o'er ocean post,
We to vengeance call you, in
A cause so near your own akin.
Death, so we avenge their fate!
To this rabble deathless hate!

[*Disperse, croaking in the air.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*on the plain*).

The northern witches I could manage featly;
But those strange phantoms baffle me completely.
And then the Blocksberg's such a handy site,
Go anywhere you will, you're always right.
DAME ILSA on her stone keeps watch and ward;
HENRY upon his peak holds cheery guard;
Then to DESPAIR the SNORERS snort and blow
All as they did a thousand years ago.
But here, stand still or walk, who's he can say
If under him the ground will not give way?
Through a smooth dell as pleasantly I stroll,
Up all at once behind me starts a whole
Hillside, yet scarcely to be called a hill,
And yet quite high enough to part me still
From my pet Sphinxes. Down the valley here
Fires flicker, flashing round strange shapes and drear.
Dancing and wheeling see yon winsome crew
With becks and wiles enticing to pursue.
Soho, then! We, who're used to toothsome fare,
Must still be hankering, no matter where.

LAMIÆ (*luring* MEPHISTOPHELES *after them*).

Onward, still onward,
Faster and faster!
Then with a spiteful
Coyness delaying,
Prattling and playing,
He'll think he's the winner.
'Tis so delightful,
Thus the old sinner
To lure and o'ermaster!
Fretting and groaning,
His stiff foot bemoaning,
Hark, he comes grumbling,
Stumbling and tumbling!

Do what he will,
While before him we fly,
Be it far, be it nigh,
He must follow us still!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*stands still*).

Curst fate! Born but to be made fools of!
From Adam made mere dolts and tools of!
We all grow old, but who grows steady?
Wert thou not fooled enough already?
We know they're good for nothing, all the race.
Pinched at the girdle, painted in the face;
No bit about them wholesome, firm, and sound,
They fall to pieces if you clasp them round;
We know it, feel it, see it at a glance —
Yet let them pipe, and after them we dance.

LAMIÆ (*stopping*).

Stay! he reflects — he pauses — lingers.
Advance, or he'll slip through your fingers!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*striding on*).

Push on! Let no uneasy twitches
Of foolish doubting stay your revel:
Good gracious! if there were no witches,
Who, who the deuce would be the devil?

LAMIÆ (*in coaxing tones*).

Round this hero, round we run;
Soon within his heart for one
Of us, full sire, will love ensue.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Truly in this twilight gleam
Damsels fair to view ye seem,
So I can't be wroth with you.

EMPUSA (*pressing forward*).

Nor yet with me! Me too admit,
As for your company most fit.

LAMIÆ.

She amongst us is too many;
Always spoils our sport, the zany!

EMPUSA (*to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

From your dear cousin hold aloof,
Empusa with the ass's hoof?
You've but a horse's hoof; yet still,
Sir Kinsman, hail, with right good will!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I fancied no one knew me here,
Yet find relations — that's severe!
The old, old tale — Go where you will,
From Harz to Hellas, kinsfolk still!

EMPUSA.

With much decision I can act;
Can take what shape I please, in fact.
But in your honour, for the nonce,
I've donned just now this ass's sconce.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These folk, they set great store, I see,
By being of the family;
Yet come what will, — disaster, shame, —
The ass's head I will disclaim!

LAMIÆ.

Avoid this hag! who puts to flight
All that is most fair and bright:
What was fair and bright before,
When she comes, is so no more.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These cousins, too, so smooth of speech,
I'm doubtful of them, all and each.
Behind their cheeks so rosy red
Some metamorphosis I dread.

LAMIÆ.

Come set to work now! We are many.
Essay your luck, — if you have any,
The first prize you may win. Come, try!
What means this pitiful to-do?
A miserable wooer you,
To strut and bear your head so high!
And now amongst us see him skip;
Your masks off slow and slyly slip,
And be your true selves by and by.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I've caught the prettiest and most lissome —
[*Embracing her.*
Ugh, ugh! The dry old withered besom!
[*Seizing another.*
And this one? The disgusting fright!

LAMIÆ.

Ha! have we caught you? Serves you right!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I had the short one in my grips —
A lizard from my finger slips,
With poll most serpent-like and smooth!
Anon the taller jade I clasp —
A Thyrsus-staff is in my grasp,
With pine-cone for a head, forsooth!
What means it all? The stout one there,
Better with her perchance I'll fare.
One venture more, — the last, — here goes!
Juicy and plump, just of the size
The Orientals highly prize.
Ugh! The puff-ball bursts beneath my nose!

LAMIÆ.

Away, and round him flit, now like
The lightning, now all blackness! Strike
The witch's baffled son with fear!
On silent wings, a ghastly crew,
Wheel round like bats! We'll make him rue
The hour he thought of coming here.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*shaking himself*).

I have not grown much wiser, 'twould appear.
They're idiots in the north, they're idiots here.
They're humbugs here as there, the ghostly crew,
And bores the bards and people too.
Here has been precious mumming, and
Sense has, as usual, had the upper hand.
At features fair a clutch I made,
And in my grasp found what appalled me;
Yet had it only longer stayed,
Even that delusion had enthralled me.
[*Losing his way among the rocks.*
Where am I? What is this, and how?
This was a path, 'tis chaos now.

The road was smooth; but boulders, lo!
At every turn perplex my feet.
Vainly I clamber to and fro —
Nowhere can I my Sphinxes meet.
One night a hill like this to breed!
Who could have dreamt so mad a thing?
A jolly witches' ride, indeed,
When they with them their Blocksberg bring!

OREAD (*from the natural rock*).

Up here! My mountain's old as time;
Its shape the same as in its prime.
My precipices jagged and sheer,
Pindus' extremest spur, revere!
Unshaken here I lift my head,
As when across me Pompey fled.
That dream-begotten phantasm there
At cock-crow will dissolve in air.
Such fabled forms I ofttimes see
Arise, then vanish suddenly.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be honour thine, thou reverend head,
With sturdy oaks engarlanded!
To thy recesses dark and deep
The brightest moonshine cannot creep.
But down by yonder brushwood strays
A light that glows with modest rays.
What strange coincidence is this?
Homunculus? It is, it is!
Whither away, my little friend?

HOMUNCULUS.

Thus on from spot to spot I wend.
Much do I long to burst my glassy screen,

And in the best sense into life to enter;
Only from all that I as yet have seen,
I can't find courage for the venture.
But hearken in your ear! On two
Philosophers I've stumbled, who
Are wrapt in deep debate, and all their talk
Is "Nature, Nature," as they walk.
I'll keep by them; for they, I wis,
Must know what earthly being is.
And I at last am sure to learn,
Whither 'tis best for me to turn.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What your own instinct prompts pursue.
For where ghosts find a lodgment, your
Philosopher is welcome too.
And be they many, be they few,
To show his skill off, he is sure
To conjure up a dozen new.
Make no mistakes, and you will ne'er be wise.
By your own doings into being rise!

HOMUNCULUS.

Still, good advice it were not wise to miss.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Go your own way! We shall see more of this.
[*They separate.*

ANAXAGORAS (*to* THALES).

Will not your stubborn mind the truth concede,
Or do you further demonstration need?

THALES.

The wave is stirred by every breeze that creeps,
But from the beetling crags far off it keeps.

ANAXAGORAS.

This mountain-ridge to fire its being owes.

THALES.

From moisture all that lives to being rose.

HOMUNCULUS.

Let me go side by side with you.
I yearn to rise to being too.

ANAXAGORAS.

Could you, O Thales, in one night produce
A mountain such as this from mud and ooze ?

THALES.

Nature, has she with her creative powers
E'er had regard to days, and nights, and hours ?
Calm and serene she plies her shaping hand ;
It is not violence makes even what is grand.

ANAXAGORAS.

But here it did ! Raging Plutonic fire,
Steam pent for ages, with explosion dire
Burst through the ancient crusts of earth, and threw
A mountain in a moment into view.

THALES.

What boots it to continue this debate ?
The mountain's there ; that's well, at any rate.

In such disputes no one step we advance,
Yet lead the patient crowd a precious dance.

ANAXAGORAS.

See, from the mountain how in bevies
They stream to fill each chasm and crevice!
With pigmies, ants, and gnomes it rings,
And other bustling tiny things.
[*To* HOMUNCULUS.
Within your hermit cell retired,
To greatness you have ne'er aspired.
To rule if you your mind can bring,
I'll have you straightway crowned their king.

HOMUNCULUS.

What says my Thales?

THALES.

I say no!
With little people, little deeds;
With great ones even the little grow
To size, and greatness greatness breeds.
Look at these cranes, a dusky cloud!
They threaten yon excited crowd,
And so would threaten, too, the king.
Downward they swoop on rushing wing,
With bony claw and pointed beak,
Their vengeance on the dwarfs to wreak.
The very air is charged with doom,
And tempest hurtles through the gloom.
A wicked elf the herons slew,
As round their quiet mere they drew.
But that death-laden arrowy sleet
Arouses vengeance fell and meet,
And in their kin such ire doth wake,
As blood, and blood alone can slake.

What now avail shield, helm, or spear?
Their heron-plumes, what boot they? See,
How ant and dactyl disappear!
The hosts, they reel, they turn, they flee.

ANAXAGORAS (*after a pause, solemnly*).

If hitherto my praise
Has to the subterranean powers been given,
In this conjuncture I uplift my gaze
To those that have their seat in heaven.
Oh, Throned above, through endless time
Wearing the freshness of thy prime,
Thee I invoke, thee now as then the same,
Threefold in form, threefold in name,
My people in their woe to free,
Diana, Luna, Hecate!
Thou the bosom that expandest,
Thou of thinkers deepest, grandest,
Thou aspect serene that wearest,
Thou a soul of fire that bearest,
Open the abysses drear
Of thy shadowy glooms — and here,
With no necromancer's aid,
Be thine ancient power displayed! [*Pause.*
Is my prayer too quickly heard?
By its force
Has the course
Of nature been disturbed and marred?
And larger, ever larger, and more near
The goddess' orbèd throne wheels down the sphere!
Fearful to the eye and dread
Turns its fire to dusky red.
No nearer! Mighty threatening ball,
Thou'lt crush us, land and sea, and all!
Was it then true, that hags Thessalian by
Dark incantations from the sky

Drew thee down, and wrung from thee
Blight and bane and misery?
The shining disk's o'ercast. It crashes!
And now it lightens and it flashes!
What din, what rushing, whizzing, pouring;
What gusts of wind through thunder roaring!
Behold me fall, abashed and prone,
Down at the footstool of thy throne!
'Twas I invoked thee, I! Do thou
Forgive, forgive my madness now!
[*Throws himself on his face.*

THALES.

What things this man has heard and seen!
They may or they may not have been;
But I felt nothing, ne'ertheless.
Mad hours are these, we must confess,
And Luna sails along the blue,
As smoothly as she used to do.

HOMUNCULUS.

Look at the pigmies' haunt! See, how
The hill, once round, is pointed now!
I felt a hideous crash and shock:
Down from the moon had fallen a rock;
And in an instant made an end,
No warning given, of foe and friend.
Yet arts like these I must revere,
Which in one single night could so
This mighty mountain structure rear,
Both from above and from below.

THALES.

Tush, tush! 'Twas all a dream. That brood
So vile is gone, then let them go!
That thou wert not their king is good.

But now away, away with me,
To Ocean's glorious Jubilee!
There guests of wondrous kind, like thee,
Expected, ay, and honoured be. [*They withdraw.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*clambering up on the opposite side*).

Here I go clambering over crags and rocks,
Among the gnarlèd roots of ancient oaks.
The vapours on my own Harz have a flavour
Of pitch, that much commends them to my favour.
'Tis next to brimstone! Here, among the Greeks,
In vain for even one sulphurous whiff one seeks.
Still, I should like to find out what the spell,
By which they feed the pangs and fires of hell.

DRYAD.

In your own land you for a sage may pass,
Abroad you're little better than an ass.
'Tis not of home you should be thinking here,
But how you should the sacred oaks revere!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We harp on what we've lost; — a feeble vice!
What we've been used to's always Paradise.
But say, what three are those in yonder den,
Who squat and cower in the glimmering shade?

DRYADS.

They are the Phorkyads. Go forward, then,
And speak to them, if you be not afraid.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And wherefore not? I am bewildered vastly!
Proud as I am, even I must needs avow,

I ne'er have looked upon their like till now,
Our hell's worst hags are not one half so ghastly!
Who shall this hideous Triad see,
Yet think there's aught repulsive in
The deadliest of old deadly sin?
We should not suffer them, not we,
To cross the threshold of the worst
And ecriest of our hells accurst.
Yet in the land of beauty, here,
This antique land to glory dear,
They children of the soil appear!
They move, they scent me, it would seem,
Twitter like vampire bats, and pipe and scream.

PHORKYADS.

Sisters! the eye, quick, give it me to spy,
Who to our temple dares approach so nigh!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

O most revered! permit me to draw near,
And beg your triple benediction here!
I am not quite a stranger — so, forgive!
Indeed, I am a distant relative.
Gods of old standing in my time I've known,
To Ops and Rhea made my bow of yore,
The Parcæ, Chaos' sisters, and your own.
I saw them last night, or the night before;
But such as you have never crossed my sight.
I'm positively dumb with sheer delight!

PHORKYADS.

There seems some sense in what this spirit says.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

My only wonder is, no bard has sung your praise!
In statues I have never seen you. Say,

How comes this so, most honoured ones, if you know?
Yours are the forms the chisel should portray,
And not such things as Venus, Pallas, Juno.

PHORKYADS.

In solitude and silent night inurned,
Our thoughts have never on such matters turned.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How should they? Living from the world retired,
By none can you be seen, or, seen, admired.
For that you must a residence command,
Where art and luxury rule hand in hand;
Where from a block of marble — presto, hey! —
Starts into life a hero every day;
Where —

PHORKYADS.

Peace! And wake in us no yearnings fond!
What should we gain, by knowing aught beyond?
In Night begot, and kin to things of Night,
To ourselves almost unknown, to others quite.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

This being so, there is not much to say;
But you to others may yourselves convey.
One eye suffices for the three, one tooth,
And 'twill comport with mythologic truth
To merge in two the essence of the three,
And lend the semblance of the third to me
For some brief space.

ONE OF THE PHORKYADS.

How think ye? Speaks he sooth?

THE OTHERS.

Let's try it. But without the eye and tooth.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Take these away, and you the essence take,
For these are what the perfect picture make.

ONE OF THE PHORKYADS.

Press one eye close! 'Tis very simply done;
That's well! Now of your dog-teeth show but one!
And you will instantly in profile show
Our sister perfectly from top to toe!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'm honoured — much! So be it!

PHORKYADS.

So be it!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*as a* PHORKYAD *in profile*).

Done!
Behold in me old Chaos' darling son!

PHORKYADS.

Chaos' undoubted daughters we.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, spite!
They'll scoff at me as an hermaphrodite!

PHORKYADS.

Our new third sister is surpassing fair!
Of eyes we have, and eke of teeth a pair.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I must get out of sight, or I know well
I'll scare the devils of the nether hell! [*Exit.*

SCENE VII. — *Rocky Bays of the Ægean Sea. The Moon pausing in the Zenith.*

SIRENS (*lying on the cliffs around, fluting and singing*).

Thou whom hags Thessalian erst,
By unholy spells rehearsed,
Drew from heaven, serenely bright,
Looking from the vault of night,
With thy silvery radiance lave
Every bright and rippling wave,
And illume yon wondrous throng
Rising now the waves along.
Thy devoted vassals we;
Luna fair, propitious be!

NEREIDS AND TRITONS (*as wonders of the deep*).

Loud with shriller voices sing,
Let them o'er broad ocean ring,
All its people summoning!
As we lay within our caves,
Fathom deep beneath the waves,
Safe from wind and stormy weather,
Your sweet song has drawn us hither.
In our transports we, behold!
Deck ourselves with chains of gold,
Brooch and clasp and diadem,
Rich with jewel and with gem.
All your fruitage, all are these!
Treasures plucked from argosies,
That now wrecked and rotting lie,

Lured to their destruction by
You, the demons of our bay.

SIRENS.

Well we know that in the sea
Fish live well and merrily,
Without pain, or care, or wish!
Still, ye throng so brisk and gay,
Fain we'd like to know to-day
If ye're something more than fish.

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

Ere we hither came, did we
Ponder well how things should be.
Brothers, sisters, come! Not far
Is it needful we should go,
Most conclusively to show
That we more than fishes are. [*They retire.*

SIRENS.

In a twinkling they
To Samothrace have sped away,
And fair for them the breezes blow!
What can they expect to gain
Where the high Cabiri reign?
Gods of wondrous kind are they,
Who beget themselves alway,
And what they are they never know.
Deign to linger on thy heights,
Gentle Luna! So the night's
Veil will tarry, and the day
Chase us not from hence away!

THALES (*on the shore to* HOMUNCULUS).

Fain would I lead you to old Nereus! See,
His cavern must be somewhere hereabout;

But such a cross-grained sour old carle is he,
It is no easy thing to draw him out.
Churl that he is, in his distorted sight
No mortal man is ever in the right.
But unto him the future is unveiled,
So he with reverence deep is hailed,
And bears a highly honoured name.
To many, too, he has been kind.

HOMUNCULUS.

Let's knock and try him! I don't mind.
It will not cost me both my glass and flame.

NEREUS.

Men's voices could they be, my ear that met?
With wrath they stir my heart down to its core:
Forms striving to attain to gods, and yet
Doomed to be like themselves for evermore.
Long years ago, had I like others felt,
In ease I might, even like a god, have dwelt;
But I was ever by the wish possessed,
To benefit the men I deemed the best;
And ever when I looked, in hopes to know
My counsels into goodly acts had thriven,
I found that matters were the same as though
My counsels never had been given.

THALES.

Yet people trust thee, man of ocean old.
Most sage of sages, turn us not away!
This flame, that bears a human shape, behold!
Whate'er you counsel him, he will obey.

NEREUS.

Counsel! Has counsel e'er availed with men?
The sagest saw falls dead on stubborn ears.

Oft as men's folly has been mourned in tears,
Wilful as ever they will be again.
Warned I not Paris like a father, ere
His passion did another's wife ensnare?
As bold he trod the Grecian shore, with awe
I told him all that I in vision saw, —
Clouds steaming up, with lurid light aglow,
Charred rafters, massacre and death below,
Troy's day of doom, immortalised in song,
Beaconing through time the curse that waits on wrong.
He mocked the old man's words, the ribald boy,
Obeyed the impulse of his lust, and Troy,
A giant corpse, fell, worn with many a fray,
To Pindus' eagles a right welcome prey.
Ulysses, too, foretold I not to him
Circe's dark wiles, the Cyclops' horrors grim?
His own delays, the follies of his train,
What not, besides! Yet where to him the gain?
Till at long last the favouring billows bore
The weary wanderer to a friendly shore.

THALES.

Such conduct to the sage is fraught with pain,
Yet his heart prompts him on to fresh essay.
Of thanks that glad his soul, one little grain
Will bushels of ingratitude outweigh.
For we are here to ask no trivial boon:
The boy there wishes to attain, and soon,
To being, and as sagely as he may.

NEREUS.

Mar not my mood — 'tis of no common kind;
Far other matters now possess my mind.
My daughters I have summoned here to me,
The Dorides, the Graces of the Sea.

Not on Olympus, nor on earth you'll meet
With forms so beautiful, so moving sweet.
From water dragons, with a bending sweep
Of subtlest charm, on Neptune's steeds they leap,
And with the element so softly blend,
The foam-flakes scarce beneath them seem to bend.
'Mid rainbow splendours in her shelly car
Comes Galatea, of them all the star,
Of Paphos hailed the goddess, since the day
When Aphrodite turned from us away;
And so for many a year, she as her own
The Temple town has claimed, and chariot throne.
Begone! Nor by your questionings eclipse
The solemn transports of a father's bliss;
I would not have, in such an hour as this,
Hate in my heart, nor fury on my lips.
Away to Proteus! Ask that being strange, —
He will your purpose better serve than me, —
How yonder boy may pass from change to change,
And come at length to be. [*Retires toward the sea.*

THALES.

We have gained nothing by this step; for, say
We light on Proteus, straight he melts away.
And, after all, he'll only, if he stays,
Give answers that bewilder and amaze.
Still, such advice you lack; so, come what may,
Let's make the trial. Onward, then, away!
[*They retire.*

SIRENS (*above, on the rocks*).

See, what are these that glide
Far o'er the billowy tide?
'Tis as white sails were nearing,
By gentle breezes steering,

So radiantly they shine,
These ocean-nymphs divine!
Let us descend! You hear
Their voices sweet and clear.

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

What we bring with us to-night
Shall content you and delight.
Flames a dread form from the field
Of Chelone's giant shield;
Gods they be, whom here we bring:
Hymns ye must of glory sing!

SIRENS.

Great in might, though small in form,
Such as shipwrecked are ye save,
When in thunder and in storm
Ships go down beneath the wave;
Gods in deepest reverence held
From the days of primal eld!

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

We bring the Cabiri hither, to keep
Peace, while we revel it over the deep;
For in their presence, so holy be they,
Neptune will gently exert his sway.

SIRENS.

Yield we must to you:
If a vessel's wrecked,
Ever ye her crew
Resistlessly protect.

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

Three we have transported thus;
The fourth refused to come with us.
He declared he was the best,
And had to think for all the rest.

SIRENS.

So one god, it would appear,
Likes at other gods to sneer.
All that gracious are revere,
All that are malignant fear!

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

Seven of them by rights there be.

SIRENS.

Where, then, are the other three?

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

To answer that were no easy task.
For them you may in Olympus ask.
There the Eighth, too, you may find,
Who was never in anybody's mind.
Their grace we have and hope to get,
But they are not all complete as yet.
These Incomparables still
  On and on aspire,
For the Unattainable
  Hungering with desire.

SIRENS.

'Tis our custom, evermore
Every throne to bow before,

In the Sun and in the Moon,
There to worship and adore;
It repays us late or soon.

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

How must our fame transcendent be,
The leaders of this Jubilee!

SIRENS.

The heroes of the olden time
Reached not a glory so sublime,
How high soe'er their fame may run.
If they the Golden Fleece have won,
You, you have the Cabiri!

UNIVERSAL CHORUS.

If they the Golden Fleece have won,
You, you / We, we } have the Cabiri!

HOMUNCULUS.

To me these uncouth shapes are like
Vile earthen pots: by token,
Sages their heads against them strike,
And, though hard, get them broken.

THALES.

That's just the thing they long for! Just
As coin takes value from the rust.

PROTEUS (*invisible*).

Such shows delight a fabler old like me;
More prized the more preposterous they be.

THALES.

Where art thou, Proteus?

PROTEUS (*ventriloquially, now near, now far off*).

Here, and here!

THALES.

I pardon you the stale old joke.
I am a friend — no mocking insincere!
I know you sham the place from which you spoke.

PROTEUS (*as from a distance*).

Farewell!

THALES (*whispers to the* HOMUNCULUS).

He's close at hand! Flame out now! Whish!
He is as curious as a fish,
And, wheresoever he may hide,
Your blaze will lure him to your side.

HOMUNCULUS.

I'll pour a flood of light — but gently though,
Or into splinters, crack! my glass will go.

PROTEUS (*in the form of a gigantic tortoise*).

What sheds a light so soft and bright?

THALES (*concealing the* HOMUNCULUS).

Good! good! Come nearer, if you'd see't.
Don't grudge the trouble, 'tis but slight!
And show yourself upon two human feet.
'Tis by our grace and leave alone,
That what we've hidden will be shown.

PROTEUS.

You have not lost your skill in dodges clever.

THALES.

Of changing shapes you're quite as fond as ever.
[*Uncovers the* HOMUNCULUS.

PROTEUS (*amazed*).

A luminous dwarf! Was never such sight? Never!

THALES.

He wants advice from you, for he would fain
To being real and complete attain.
He came into the world, I've heard him say,
Only by half in some mysterious way.
With gifts of spirit he is dowried well,
But sorely lacks in what is tangible.
As now the glass there only gives him weight,
He with all speed would be incorporate.

PROTEUS.

A real virgin's son art thou;
Thou art before thou ought to be, somehow.

THALES (*in a whisper*).

In other ways, methinks, all is not right.
He is, I fancy, an hermaphrodite.

PROTEUS.

So much the better, since in every case
He's sure to find himself not out of place.
But much reflection here no good will do,
In the wide sea you must begin anew!

There in the little things commence,
And on the less delight to feed:
So by degrees you grow, and thence
To higher excellence succeed.

HOMUNCULUS.

The air blows sweet and softly here. The dew
Thrills me with rapture through and through.

PROTEUS.

Right, right, my pretty youth! And you,
As you go on, will find it sweeter still.
On this small tongue of land the dew
Exhales a vapour more ineffable.
See right in front yon wondrous train,
That's wafted hither o'er the main!
Come with me to them!

THALES.

Take me too!

HOMUNCULUS.

A wondrous ghostly three are we to view!

TELCHINES OF RHODES.

Upon Hippocampi and Sea-dragons, bearing Neptune's Trident.

CHORUS.

The trident of Neptune we forged, that at will
The angriest waves of the ocean can still.
If the Thund'rer his storm-clouds unrolls overhead,
Straight Neptune opposes their armament dread;
And as down from above lightning quivers and flashes,
So up from below wave after wave dashes;

And the bark, that in anguish 'twixt billow and blast
Has been tossed to and fro, is sucked down at the last;
Then as he has lent us his sceptre to-day,
Serene and at ease let us gambol and play!

SIRENS.

Hail, ye priests of Helios, hail,
Blest ones of the cheerful day,
Now whilst we to Luna pale
Our devoted homage pay!

TELCHINES.

Fair queen of the bow that shines o'er us so bright,
Thou hearest thy brother extolled with delight!
To Rhodes the high-favoured thine ear thou dost lend,
Whence unto him Pæans eternal ascend.
He begins the day's course, and on us at its close
A long level glance keen and fiery he throws.
The mountains, the cities, the shore, and the wave,
Give delight to the god, and are beauteous and brave.
No mist hangs around us, and if one comes near,
A zephyr, a beam, and our island is clear!
In manifold shapes he beholds himself there,
As stripling, as giant, as mighty, as fair.
We, we were the first did such beings divine
In the forms, not unworthy, of mortals enshrine!

PROTEUS.

Let them sing, and let them boast!
Dead works are a jest, at most,
Beside the sun's life-giving rays;
They melt and mould, and when at last
Their handiwork in brass is cast,
Straightway they riot in its praise.

But what's the end of all their vaunted show
These images of gods renowned,
An earthquake hurled them to the ground;
And they've been melted down long, long ago.

The throes of earth, or past or present,
Are always anything but pleasant.
Life in the billows better fares;
Thee to the eternal waters bears
The Dolphin Proteus. (*Transforms himself.*) See, 'tis done!
There will you thrive in all you try:
So leap upon my back, and I
Will wed you to the deep anon!

THALES.

Yield to the noble aspiration
Of new-commencing your creation.
Prepare for mighty effort now!
By laws eternal move, and thou,
Through countless changes having passed,
Shalt rise into a man at last.

[HOMUNCULUS *mounts the Proteus-dolphin.*

PROTEUS.

In spirit hence to ocean wide!
Unfettered there shalt thou abide,
There roam as blithe as free;
But yearn not for a higher state,
For, once as man incorporate,
All's over then with thee.

THALES.

That's as things chance: it is a fine thing, too,
To be a proper man in season due.

PROTEUS (*to* THALES).

If of your stamp he be, perchance it may.
You are no fleeting creature of a day;
For 'tis now many hundred years, since I
'Mongst the pale ghosts first saw you trooping by.

SIRENS (*on the rocks*).

Lo, what clouds are yonder streaming
Round the moon in circlet bright!
Doves they are, love-kindled, gleaming,
Pinioned as with purest light.
Paphos forth has sent them, glowing
Harbingers of love and joy;
Perfect is our feast, o'erflowing
Full with bliss without alloy!

NEREUS (*advancing to* THALES).

Roamers through the night might deem
Yonder halo merely haze,
But we spirits know the gleam,
Hail it with a wiser gaze.
They are doves, that round my child
In her shelly chariot fly,
Wondrous is their flight and wild,
Learned in ages long gone by.

THALES.

I too look on that as best
Which to good men pleasure gives,
When in warm and cosy nest
Something holy haunts and lives.

PSYLLI AND MARSI (*on sea-bulls, sea-calves, and rams*).

In Cyprus' wild cave-recesses,
Where the god of the sea annoys not,
Where Seismos shakes and destroys not,
Where the breeze evermore wafts caresses
There Cypris's chariot, the golden,
We watch, as we watched in the olden
Days, in contentment serene;
And our fairest we bring in the hushing
Of night, o'er the rippling waves rushing,
In the bloom of her loveliness flushing,
By the new race of mortals unseen.
Our duty thus silently plying,
Nor eagle, nor yet wingèd lion,
Dismays us, nor cross, no, nor crescent;
However, through changes incessant,
On earth they may fool it, and rule it,
Now hither, now thitherward swaying,
Pursuing, and smiting, and slaying,
Waste cities and harvest-fields laying,
'Tis ever our care
To herald our mistress, the matchlessly fair.

SIRENS.

Through the waves serenely cleaving,
Circling round the car divine,
And like serpents interweaving,
Row on row, and line on line,
Speed ye onwards, stately gliding,
Ocean's daughters, pleasing wild,
With your Galatea guiding,
All her mother in my child!
Grave is she, of godlike seeming,
As of an immortal race,
Yet like gentle human women,
Sweet, and of alluring grace.

DORIDES (*passing in chorus before* NEREUS, *clustering upon dolphins*).

Luna, shine, thy radiance pouring
Round this flower of youth, for here
To our sire we bring, imploring
His good-will, our bridegrooms dear!
[*To* NEREUS.
Boys we rescued when the billow
Whelmed them in the tempest's wrack;
Couching them on rushy pillow,
We to life caressed them back!
Now with kisses to delight us,
Kisses all of fire, must they
For the life we gave requite us;
View them, then, with grace, we pray!

NEREUS.

The twofold gain who would not highly treasure,
In doing others grace, to do himself a pleasure?

DORIDES.

Father, did we well? To hold them,
Grant us, so shall we be blest:
All undying let us fold them
To our ever-youthful breast.

NEREUS.

Would you enjoy your lovely prey,
Then mould each stripling to a man;
But children, know, I never may
Bestow what Zeus, Zeus only, can.
The wave, on which you're swept and tossed,
Makes love, too, changeful evermore:
If on their hearts your hold be lost,
Best set them quietly on shore!

DORIDES.

Sweet boys, we love ye well, but soon
From you, alas! must sever;
The gods deny the wished-for boon,
A love that loves for ever.

THE YOUTHS.

Still love and tend us, and your own
Stout ship-boys will not falter;
Such goodly cheer we ne'er have known,
Nor would for better alter.

[GALATEA *approaches in the shell chariot.*

NEREUS.

My darling!

GALATEA.

O father, what ecstasy!
Stay, dolphins, stay! My gaze is riveted by thee!

NEREUS.

Already are they passed, already gone,
In sweeping circles steering o'er the ocean;
What is to them the yearning heart's emotion?
Oh, would that I with them were sailing on!
Yet in that one brief glance is such delight,
As doth the long year's yearning well requite!

THALES.

Hail! hail! hail evermore!
With joy I am brimming o'er,
Each fibre and nerve, through and through
By the Beautiful pierced, and the True!
From water sprang all things, and all
Are by water upheld or must fall.

Then, ocean, grant thou for our aiding
Thine influence ever-pervading!
If by thee the clouds were disspread not,
If by thee the rich brooklets were shed not,
If by thee the streams all ways were sped not,
And the rush of the torrents were fed not,
What then were the universe, mountain and plain?
'Tis thou dost all life that is freshest maintain!

ECHO.

Chorus of the whole circle.

'Tis from thee flows all life that is freshest amain.

NEREUS.

Already they are far from shore,
Meet me eye to eye no more!
On they speed, a countless train,
All in festival array,
In a long extended chain,
Winding, circling on their way.
But my Galatea's car,
Still I see it sharp and bright!
It is shining like a star
Through them all upon the sight!
That dear cynosure is steeped in light!
Though it be removed so far,
Still it shimmers bright and clear,
Ever true and ever near!

HOMUNCULUS.

'Mid these waters soft and bright,
All whereon I flash my light
Is bewitching fair!

PROTEUS.

'Mid these waters living bright,
For the first time gleams thy light
With a music rare!

NEREUS.

But lo! what fresh mystery yonder between
The groups of the children of ocean is seen?
What flames round the car, round my darling one's feet?
Now wildly it flashes, now softly, now sweet,
As if with love's passionate pulses it beat!

THALES.

'Tis Homunculus, blinded by Proteus' deceit!
The symptons are these of a yearning intense;
Soon the cry shall be heard of an agonised moan:
He will shatter his glass on the radiant throne.
Now it flames, now it lightens, now pours forth immense.

SIRENS.

What fiery marvel illumines the sea,
Where wave breaks on wave in sparkles of light?
It so lightens, and brightens, and flashes, that we
See their forms all aglow as they move through the night,
And flames round them eddy and glimmer and gleam.
Then be Eros, of all the Beginner, supreme!

Hail, ye ocean billows, bound
With zone of holy fire around!
Water, hail! Hail, fire! Hail, all
Doings strange that here befall!

GENERAL CHORUS.

Hail, ye breezes, blowing free!
Hail, ye caves of mystery!
You we praise, and you adore,
Mighty elemental Four!

END OF VOLUME I.

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